Transgender Tapestry

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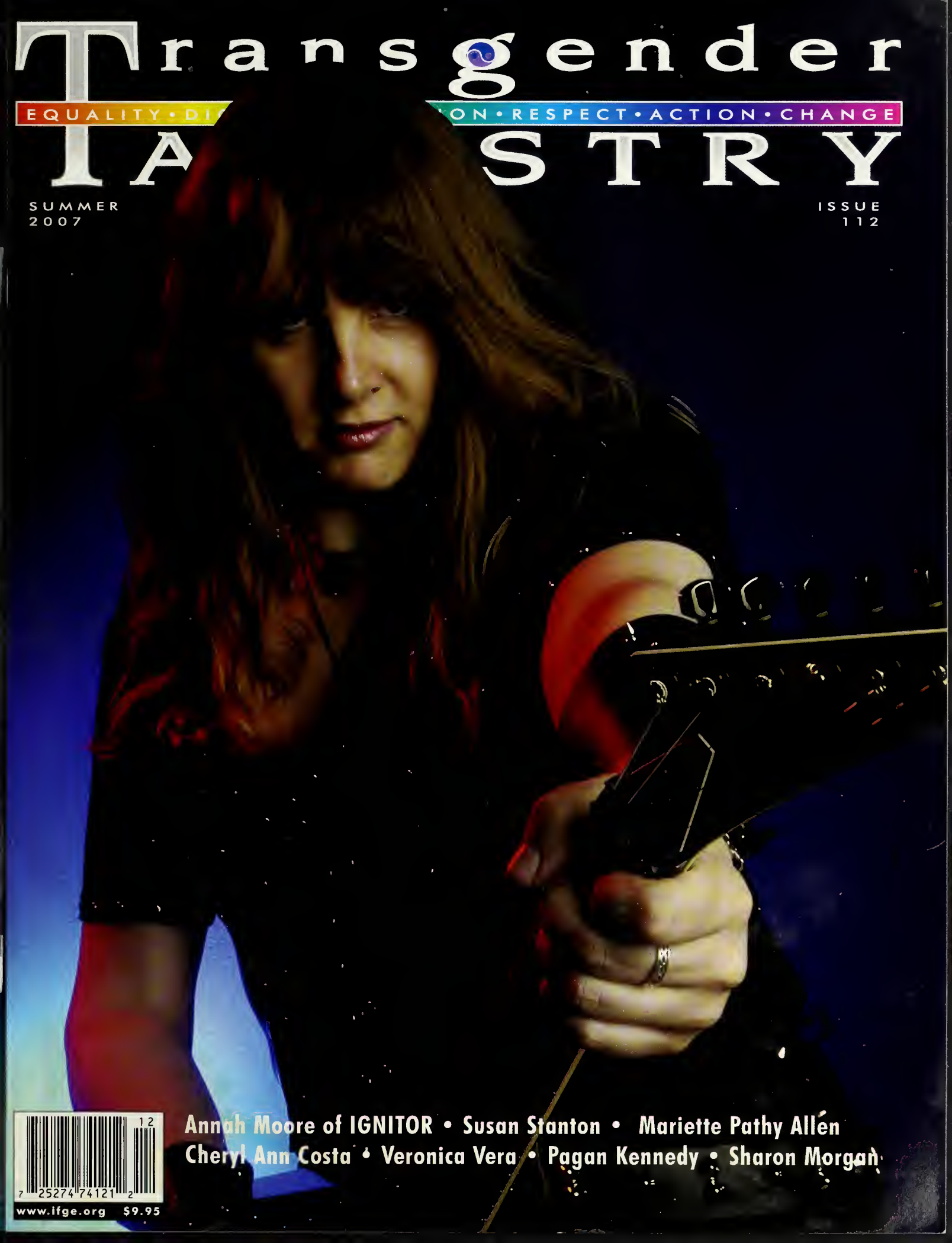
SUMMER 2007

ISSUE 112



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*"I remember when I was first thinking of the very real possibility of my going through a *gasp* sex change. This was in the days before tranny support groups. I steeled myself and made the long distance call to IFGE. To my delight, I spoke with a trans woman who calmed me down and pointed me in the direction of some deeper self-work prior to making my decision to proceed. It was invaluable advice. I owe a debt to IFGE. I think many trans folks do. Maybe one of them is you? If not right this minute, then perhaps some day? Look, IFGE is an organization that seems to rise above all politics of the trans experience, getting to the heart of what matters to each of its multi-identified members. Wouldn't it be worth the mini-investment of a membership to make sure IFGE is there for all of us? I think so."*

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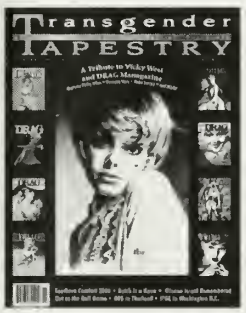

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Guidelines For Contributors

Transgender Tapestry is a magazine for and about crossdressers, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed, and other gender-variant persons, and those who support them.

Our Readers

Write for a general audience. Our readers include closeted and out people: crossdressers, transsexuals, transgenderists, intersexed persons, gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, heterosexuals, therapists, physicians, ministers, spouses and significant others, family members, and friends. Our readers span all ages, races, nationalities, religions, spiritualities, beliefs and opinions, and educational backgrounds. Your piece may be targeted for one group, but it should speak to the larger readership.

We want writing that challenges categories, presumptions, and accepted thought.

How To Submit

The best way to send materials is via e-mail. We get it immediately and we don't have to retype it.

Send your submissions to: editor@ifge.org. Attach a file, using MIME encoding. These formats are acceptable for text files: Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Rich Text Files (RTF), and Text. Please name your file so it makes sense to us, and for goodness sakes, be sure to include your name and contact information with text files. A file named "Tapestry" doesn't tell us much! Much better to use "John Smith Poem" or "Martha Michaelson Submission."

It's okay to send text in the body of an e-mail, but our Eudora Light mail reader doesn't recognize embedded codes.

Graphic images should be high-resolution TIFF or EPS format, saved at 300dpi and submitted to the editor (address below) on Zip disk or CD-R. Please include your return address if you would like your materials returned to you. If you prefer to send images in BMP, GIF, or JPG format—although they are easy to send via e-mail, please know the quality of your image will be severely compromised by the printing process.

Unless they're self-extracting, please don't send zipped files without clearing it with us beforehand. No e-mail? Send a PC-compatible or MAC floppy to Tapestry Editor, P.O. Box 540229, Waltham, MA 02454-0229.

We hate typing in text, but we understand some people can't afford or don't like computers, so believe it or not, we accept articles on paper. Please include a brief biography with your submission.

What To Send Us

We want original material. We rarely accept simultaneous or previously published submissions. We're interested in ideas which have been previously under-explored. We accept submissions on gender issues of general interest, including: new (for some people) types of diversity; little-known information about transgender history; under-utilized resources and populations; personal struggles; social or medical issues; humor with an underlying message; and satire.

Things We Shouldn't Have To Say

DO send us stuff. Deadlines are firm. Contact us before submitting. Talk with us before writing, if possible. Let us know what you want to do and when you can deliver it. Send us a rough draft if you have one. Be reliable. Make your word stick. Be concise. Don't ramble, and don't try to tackle too much in one article.

Don't be heartbroken if we don't use your submission. A rejection often has more to do with the theme or the space available in the magazine than the quality of the writing.

Fore Word

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

A few months ago, at the Colorado Gold Rush Conference in Denver, I made a shocking discovery. I have been a Gold Rush participant for years and I love their friendly, down-home atmosphere. It is a much cozier place to relax than the hustle-and-bustle blockbuster conferences like Southern Comfort—and I don't have to give any speeches.

This year my friend Laura Ellis, whose culinary skill and discernment are legendary, urged me to come with her to experience an acclaimed local restaurant, named appropriately enough, "The Fort." Blazing logs in the fireplaces warmed the hand-made adobe brick walls, while an enchanting Native American musician serenaded us and regaled us with stories of Navajo courtship rituals. Some of the more eye opening, and delicious, menu items I sampled included "elk chops" and "rattlesnake cakes." Surprising, but not shocking.

Later, back at the ranch -umm- conference, community emissary Christine Hochberg introduced me to one of IFGE's newer members, Julia DeGrace. Julia recently joined IFGE at our conference in Austin, and was thrilled to discover how many transgender brothers and sisters she had after a lifetime of isolation. Little did she suspect . . .

Like most transgender people, I too grew up under the impression that I was the only person in world struggling with gender issues. The feelings of isolation had often seemed overwhelming, and I did not get to meet another trans-person until I was in my twenties and I discovered the Tiffany Club of New England.

Julia admitted that she was actually from Massachusetts, when I told her I had just flown in from Boston. "Of course, I'm not actually from Boston, I'm from a little town nobody's ever heard of called Gardner," I said as Julia stumbled and her purse slipped from her fingers and hit the floor.

"Gardner?" she stammered, "you can't be from Gardner."

When I assured her that I wouldn't make that up, she asked "Home of the Wildcats?"

"Yeah, home of the Wildcats. Hey, how do you know my high school mascot?"

"I went to Gardner High!" she shrieked, "You'll never believe it, but I actually came to Denver to meet my cousin Russell, and he went to Gardner High too!"

It turns out that Russell is a trans-man who attended my high school during the same years that I had. The three of us had all grown up feeling that we were the only ones in the world, but we had not even been the only ones in our little town or high school.

Stranger still, two thousand miles from home, and there we were having our high school reunion. Now that was shocking.

So much for being a rare condition, or maybe it's the water . . .

ABOVE: Julia and Denise / TOP RIGHT: Denise and Dhillon Khasla / BOTTOM RIGHT: Marci Bowers and Denise

WASHINGTON BEAT

IFGE's had a shiny new office in Washington DC for a few months now. For this debutante hailing from the frontier town of Boston our nation's capital was a bit disorienting at first. I was used to navigating meandering streets that were strategically plotted out by blue-blooded cows. By comparison, the DC architects were so obsessive-compulsive they have actually alphabetized the streets! The cows in Boston were never in a hurry, and they are trying to remind us that we shouldn't be, either.

I am also getting used to the 8-hour commute. Traveling between the two locations, in addition to my already hectic travel schedule, has left me feeling like a migrant worker. I keep expecting immigration to ask me for my green card as I arrive.

On my southern sojourns I have the great fortune to enjoy the warm hospitality of Pat and Trish Conover, longtime IFGE supporters. They live in Silver Spring MD, only a mile and a half from our new DC digs. Allowing me to become a part of their household is going above and beyond the call of duty. Talk about taking one (in) for the team!

Pat, who is the author of *Transgender Good News*, has long advocated immersing IFGE in the national scene. When we finally came round to her idea, she was instrumental in helping us secure the great office we now occupy there. When I started to fret about living arrangements, she graciously offered me a spare bedroom. Now, on nice days, I can actually walk to work, a luxury I don't believe I have ever enjoyed. It is also a great comfort to have a surrogate family when moving to a new town. A big Thank You to Pat and Trish!

The IFGE north office in Waltham is handling *Tapestry* subscriptions and IFGE memberships, as well as the housing the Synchronicity Bookstore. 400 miles to the south I am now also busy pounding the pavement and knocking on doors; trying to give and get the information that affects the transgender community.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

The first event I attended in my new hometown was the **Transgender Day of Remembrance** on November 30. Although the Day of Remembrance is supposed to be sad, the experience left me outraged instead.

My inaugural stay in Washington has started out on a somber note. The first event I have had the privilege of attending here is the "District of Columbia Transgender Day of Remembrance." That is the official name given to this day, November 30, 2006, by Adrian Fenty, the mayor of DC. I have been to too many other vigils for this same reason, but I have never been to one that hit me the way that this one did. In addition to the raw and poignant display of grief for our fallen sisters and brother, I witnessed firsthand a deep division that runs through our community. This tragedy is all the worse for being perpetuated by members of our own community.

Out of hundreds of people in a packed room in the **Martin Luther King Library**, only five of the people present where White (including myself, Bree Hartlage, and Jessica Xavier). Every other person in that room was Black or Latino. Where was everyone else? Their absence was more than notable; it was tragic. In our nation's capital, on our most somber occasion, race had split our community in two.

The service was intensely emotional, and much different from any others I have attended. When people began calling out the names of our fallen sisters and brothers, I was overwhelmed by how many names poured forth. These were not names being read from a printed sheet. These were friends, these were family. They finally ran out of time and had to stop the recounting, but they did not run out of names.

I learned a lot about Washington that night. I speak often about the "transgender community," but I cannot escape the glaring fact that we are at least two communities. Black and white transgender people in Washington live in different cities. We couldn't even come together to mourn our dead. I am ashamed.

LOBBY WEEK

Although the cherry blossoms tried to tell us that spring was here in January, things didn't really heat up here until May. No less than three organizations lobbying our exalted rulers on behalf of the gender variant this year.

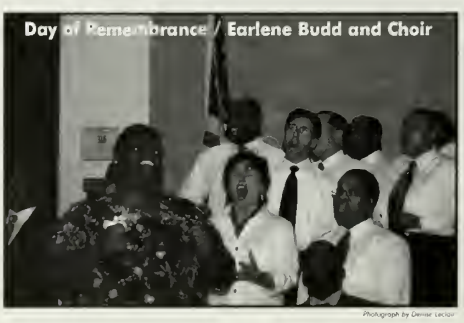
The National Center for Transgender Equality had its 2nd Lobby Day On May 15th. NCTE kicked off its event with an A-list reception at the National Press Club. The flash of cameras was blinding due to the news crews following Susan Stanton, the former city manager of Largo Florida (see our interview on p.17).

The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition did its lobbying on May 16. NTAC held its training at IFGE's new location on Carroll St on the 15th. Although somewhat smaller, the NTAC crew had great organization to their lobbying efforts, and the benefit of additional years of practice.

Last, but maybe not least, the **Gender Public Advocacy Coalition** held its lobbying effort on Friday, May 18, in conjunction with its 2007 GenderYOUTH Leadership Summit. GPAC is now focused primarily on youth issues to the point where it is not really a "transgender" focused organization, but we knew that already. In any case they do seem to be doing a great job of getting youth involved, and that is not an easy task.

This is only the first installment of "The Washington Beat." As I get more settled in to my new home-away-from-home I will have a lot more to report on. Like the Mars Rovers, I will be sending back images and information on this strange and exotic terrain for a long time to come. If our community is going to advance, and take our rightful place in society, we need to be fully informed. In the words of Angela Brightfeather, "Ink, paper and the truth can cure a forked tongue, if applied liberally."

Denise with Rep. Tammy Baldwin and Michele E.



Day of Remembrance / Earlene Budd and Choir

Photograph by Denise Lecoq

ERRATA for Issue 111

On page 18, we listed Alice Novic as "Novik."

Monica Helms's article "Alice" was not listed in the Table of Contents.

The photograph of the performer on page 17, bottom left, was listed only as "The Chief." He has revealed his true identity as Blake Alford. He said, "Well, I showed you my ass, so I may as well give you my name."

Some people have pointed out the unusual spelling of the word "**Managazine**" on the Cover . . . . . .

LETTERS

Dear Ms. Leclair,

On Saturday, March 24, 2007, I received Issue #111 of Transgender Tapestry. Not until today, the 26th, have I been able to open and read this issue. I will do my very best to make this as brief a letter as possible. I have been a member of IFGE since 1996. After reading your "Fore Word" in the current issue of Tapestry, I feel compelled to write. Directly to you.

I am also a woman. For several years now (I had my GRS in 1997) I have ignored receiving the male pronoun. As you stated, I am a woman.

I am a 56-year-old (will be 57 this June) Caucasian woman who happens to be a published writer, published photographer (back when there was film and I could afford a camera), and performed / published composer. I have also been unemployed since November 2005 when, after "attaining" my first tonic/clonic (grand mal) seizure, I was diagnosed with Epilepsy. Who in the **** in their early to mid-50's thinks about or worries about or prepares for getting Epilepsy??

The reason I am just getting around to reading Issue #111 today is because from March 19th through 23rd, I spent another five days in a hospital for Epilepsy-related problems. This was my third stay in a hospital in less than one year for epilepsy. Not only have I not held a job since 11/05, I have not had any income since 06/06, and my medical insurance (COBRA) expires at the end of May 2007. I do have one option as a resident of Minnesota for medical insurance through the state. Only one problem: I can't afford it. I briefly told friends; "I don't think Minneapolis needs a homeless 56-year-old Transsexual Composer with Epilepsy." That has lost its humor. Twice the SSA has denied me disability, and every time I think I can look for a job, either a side effect from my meds makes it unlikely I could hold a job or I encounter a similar medical problem. Now you know why I have had to drop my membership in IFGE as well as my subscription to Tapestry.

Finally, and most relevant to your Fore Word, you may have noticed I referred to myself as a composer, writer, photographer, musician. Despite being raised in a dyslexic household where my father was an automobile salesman and my mother a graphic artist, I became artist #2. The arts have been in these arteries and veins since as far back as I can remember. Some of my closest friends are musicians, composers, writers and artists. I have NEVER had a single problem with any of them accepting me just as I am. Twice I have had "birthday parties" where all the other participants were composers. In 2005, there were five other composers (all women), and in 2006 the other six composers were both women and men.

At this point in time, I do not know if either a miracle or some other person / event will present me with an income and a source of financial stability. I do know that I am going to keep going out there and fighting like hell to get what I need (first) and if it is possible to get what I want I will pursue that as well. And I don't give a damn what other people think about my voice conflicting with my appearance, they can go and shove it. I am a woman, and I am not going to let anyone or anything get in my way. I have had several of my music compositions performed just since 2002 (seven to be exact) and I plan on applying for every grant, fellowship, or other financial assistance with composing that I can as long as I live. I do have a website: *http://www.lisaragsdale.com*

I have, as usual, written too much. Excuse me. Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,
Lisa Renee Ragsdale
Member #1087, Minnesota
Jslisa6@scc.net

Response to Fantasy Girl vs. Real woman
Tapestry #110

In response to the article by Ms. Gilbert. I feel that she has wrongly broken down our unique individualism into supposedly box-sized quirks that separate CDs from real women. Like it or not we ALL live some degree of fantasy life whether or not a person is straight, gay, transgendered, or not. A woman who believes her husband loves her and is being faithful when she knows different is living a fantasy. The guy who buys an RV thinking his kids will want to go with him and the wife cross country only to find out later that they could care less, is living a fantasy. The couple who sacrifice things now for the eventual rewards that come with retirement and a full life together is living a fantasy.

Dr. Roy Firestone in his landmark book from the late 80's "Fantasy Bonds" describes so many more of our relationships that exist on a fantasy basis simply because as humans we create and support relationships as we want them to be, not as they are in reality. As I've said in my own book *The Stranger in the Mirror: Diary of a Cross-dresser*, "A girl will marry a fellow overlooking his alcoholic traits thinking that after they are married she can 'fix' him or that he will want to join her in doing what ever it takes to make the marriage work." Wrong! The fact that I was not born a "real woman" does not take away from the depth of my feeling as one. Nor does my desire to keep my penis make me any less of a woman than anyone who has had SRS.

As far as "autogynephilia" goes, yes I do love the way I look as a woman and if I did not I wouldn't do it! So why is that so profound an assumption by Mr. Blanchard? When I leave the house dressed I feel that I have done the best job that time allowed me, to look as good as I could and then during my travels I don't worry any more about how I look but how I feel, generally good, and try to pass those positive feelings on to others. I firmly believe that you get back the kind of vibes you put out and I can say I have never been rudely treated while cross-dressed, because I act as if I belonged not as if someone was doing me a favor by not beating me.

So while I have a variety of fantasies in my life, like winning the lottery, living as a woman is only one of them, and the fact that I love the way I look as a woman needs no explanation. So we should stop trying to figure out what makes the girl inside us tick and listen to her needs not her fears. I feel I am just as much a woman as a genetic woman and just as much one as a TS. And I don't apologize for liking the way I look as a female, I've worked hard on my look, as most of us do. So put the boxes and scalpels away girls and admit that there are a whole array of us that defy definition and predictability, and simply enjoy the ride and go out and have fun. You can read all the books you want to about football, but you'll never get the idea until you've stepped out on the field and played the game. Get out on the field girls and take a few bumps! "What doesn't kill ya makes you stronger."

Alan Hoxie
New York
AHoxie@dhcr.state.ny.us

To Denise

We talked on the phone on Fri Feb. 16th. I'm signing up for IFGE membership, along with purchasing Kate Bornstein's book. Thanks for the nice conversation and for hooking me up with this great deal. I cut out Kate Bornstein's picture, it's an inspiration to me to go forward when I feel down.

Brenda S.
Member No. 3328, Ohio

Dear IFGE,

Please send me a subscription to Transgender Tapestry plus membership (I'm very low income at this time - I wish it could be more.)

I used to subscribe years ago - but dropped off the Face of the Earth - now I'm back and very happy to be where I feel at home, Back in Genderland!

I look forward to your latest copy.

Love to you all.
Yours Truly,
Robert E.
Member No. 3326, New York

Denise,

Thank you for sending "Transgender Tapestry" so quickly. It arrived in two days. The last time I saw a copy of it was about 15 years ago. It was nice to see your pretty photo also.

Glad to see there is an award named after Lee Frances Heller. She ministered to alcoholics and homeless persons in NJ for some years. I was in Christian ministry before retirement also, and was overseas. Lee Frances and her assistant, Becky Allison, were very supportive and encouraging. If you ever did an article on Lee Frances or Becky, I would appreciate a copy.

Those of us who are ordinary CD's with family and responsibilities can only dress periodically. But I appreciate your organization's efforts to help inform people. Like so many CD's, I had femme feelings at a very young age, but I was in my 20's before I read anything about transvestism.

Wish I had more resources, but I do what I can to promote understanding. Those boys who start with girl's clothes now will do it all their lives, and parents need understanding.

Haven't been to Boston in 30 years, but I want to visit the old sites. Maybe I can find your office someday.

Thanks again and God Bless.
Donna C.
Member No. 3414, New Jersey

Dear IFGE Staff:

I want to thank you so much for the timely answer you gave me concerning my misunderstanding of the withdrawal from my Visa card. No, I do not want a refund. I think you are doing a great job, except for when it addresses people such as myself who were in prison for a while and are being denied treatment or civil rights concerning GID.

That brings up a subject I want to give you a heads up about. I was placed in the state Sexual offender program after being released from prison. I would not have been put here, but my religion of Wicca was a major factor in doing so. The program here is very Christian based. Besides trying to force that religion on you as a grounds to be released from here, the written program itself states that Transsexuals are "sex offenders". It lists Transsexualism as a sexual desire to be a female and to wear female clothing. In a 42 USCA §1983 civil rights action that I had brought against the DMH (which was just dismissed) the staff at the program told the court that to allow anyone to dress as a female was to cause them to re-offend. I have had experts tell the court that the staff is not trained and has no idea what they are saying, but the court sided with the state. As well, just a few months ago the state Attorney General told the court (a state court) that Transsexuals were gay men, and any man that had been married or "fathered" children could not be a transsexual. The court agreed that in order to be a Transsexual (MtF), there could be no history of sexual contact with females. All that is now unpublished case law that could be used in rulings against Transsexuals later on.
I asked for help years ago, and was turned down. South Carolina does not use certified persons as other states do, in treating or diagnosing sex offenders, they make it up as they go. Most of the program is written by a right-wing Christian group.

If allowed to go on like this, you will be seeing this affect everyone in years to come. There is one GID expert in the state, and who is against the way things are here as well.
I have tried to obtain him but he is out of my price range, I tried to get the court to order him as an expert witness, and that is when the state A.G. obtained the ruling that there could be no history of sex with females, and denied my request. His name is Dr. Thomas Marten. I do not know if you have information on him. As I said before, if you allow South Carolina to keep on putting out these court rulings, you will find it coming to affect everyone before it's over.

It is so bad here, that when a state Psychiatrist wrote a "rule-out" order for GID, the staff here tore it out of my medical chart. The ruling by the state is that since I was treated for Gender Dysphoria at 14 in 1963, that I "would have grown out of it by now." I know some of these things that are being said sound like the dark ages, never the less it's true. Just so you know some battles are going on that you were not aware of.

Sincerely,
"Sarah Elizabeth"
Member No. 3223 , South Carolina

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Go Ask Alice

Safe at Conventions?

The Mysterious Case of My Vanishing Purse

by Alice Novic, M.D.

Back in February, I came to the Colorado Gold Rush to rehearse the keynote speech I'd be giving at California Dreamin' and to sign and sell copies of *Alice in Genderland* in the vendor area. It was a delightful, friendly convention, and I could not have been more pleased that I had come until the last day, as I packed up my vending station and went to sell my leftover books to the IFGE Bookstore. There I handed the books to Denise and tried to give someone who said I'd inspired her to take her first step out the door the attention she deserved, before grabbing the roll-a-board suitcase that contained all my other materials. Five minutes later, on reaching my second-floor hotel-room door, I realized that it didn't contain my keycard and purse. So I headed immediately back down to the vendor area. There, people were packing up, and Denise asked, "Was that your Coach bag we saw? We were wondering who was carrying such a nice purse."

"Don't worry," said the kind lady from the Transformation Boutique, "Johnny from the GLBT Center was just here with it a moment ago. He must have taken it up to the front desk." *Okay, no cause for alarm,* I thought as I proceeded to the front desk but . . . no purse. *Still no reason to panic,* I thought as I ambled my way to the Gold Rush registration desk, but they too didn't know what I was talking about and suggested I speak to the event coordinator.

Remaining optimistic, I dressed for the final banquet and party afterward and sought the woman out as soon as I got there. She was helpful and agreed to ask everyone if they had seen my pocketbook before introducing that night's keynote speaker, which she graciously did and without mentioning that I was the goofy one who'd lost her handbag. When no one turned up with it by the end of dinner, I asked her, "Who exactly is this Johnny guy who seems to have my purse?" She explained that he was that cute, young volunteer from the GLBT Center of Colorado manning their table at the convention. "I think he left, but he should be back to join us all at the bar later on just like last night. I just left a message for him too."

Okay, I thought and did my best to get around to business as usual, trying to meet as many of my CD sisters as possible to share my message of hope, pride, and adventure. I did my best to lose myself in that process, and before I knew it, it was eleven o'clock. I sought out the event coordinator to see if Johnny had returned. He hadn't. "What exactly did you mean when you said he was a volunteer for the GLBT Center?" I asked.

"He was doing community service," she replied.

"What does that mean?"

"He may have been serving time for some minor offense."

"Oh my god, this guy is some kind of crook or drug addict that none of us really know. What the hell! This convention's over for me right now, and I better just get upstairs to my room and start canceling credit cards."

I threw off my wig and makeup and started to assess the damage. There'd been $500 in my purse as well as two MasterCards, a cash card, a driver's license with my real male name and address, and house keys. Not only that but pictures of my wife and kids and my ex-boyfriend (call me sentimental). Fortunately both Melissa and Frank were always well aware of each other, but still. And, lest I forget, a pricey Palm Treo cellphone with a full address book in it with more personal and some financial information. I spent the rest of the night freezing bank accounts, canceling credit cards, and figuring out how I might be able to get out to the airport and onto my plane home without ID.

Once home, fortunately, and after a night's rest, I started to follow up on things with the Denver Police Dept. and the Gold Rush coordinator. When I didn't hear back from her, I went ahead and phoned up the director of the GLBT Center. She was interested in what I had to say but replied that she would begin some sort of slow, careful (hard-to-follow-through-on) fact-finding process that would likely lead to something far short of proof beyond a reasonable doubt. I replied that we both knew what had probably happened and that I didn't appreciate her placing a petty criminal in the midst of our transgender convention—and without anyone to watch over him. I explained to her that many of us TGs have secrets and so much to lose and that I was looking for her to apologize and pledge to learn something from this incident. She said that she just didn't see it that way and gave me the sense that she could try to rehabilitate her "volunteers" anyway she saw fit and that I was just a pampered professional crying NIMBY (Not in my backyard).

I learned two weeks later, after hours on the phone and changing all 16 locks on our kooky California home, that Johnny had been dismissed as a "community service volunteer" at the GLBT Center.

Though she never admitted it, I learned two weeks later, after hours on the phone and changing all 16 locks on our kooky California home, that Johnny had been dismissed as a "community service volunteer" at the GLBT Center. And I must admit to you folks that Johnny isn't his real name. Because I can't be 100% percent sure of what happened to my purse, I've given my probable perpetrator a pen name to protect him in the unlikely event that he might be innocent. Maybe I deserved all that pain and suffering for having a Coach bag and leaving it unattended for ten minutes? Maybe this kind of thing was bound to happen eventually because, being a crossdresser, I don't wear a purse daily and haven't quite learned to treat it like part of my body. But still, how would you feel? Best keep my experience in the back of your mind, as you hustle and bustle about your next convention.

Life's rich, complex, and full of possibilities. Be careful and enjoy!

To learn more about me than you'd ever dare ask, please see my smart, sexy memoir, Alice in Genderland: A Crossdresser Comes of Age (http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book_detail.asp?&isbn=0-595-31562-3).

The Fruitees designed by Nick Curto.

Clover Honey, Miss Vera, and Laverne Cox.

Kate Bornstein holds her Passion Fruit Award.

Laverne Cox, Clover Honey, Rita Petite and Modeline.

Mr. Murray Hill suspiciously eyes Managing Director Jeffrey Leeds hand.

A PASSION FOR FRESH FRUITS

Kate Bornstein and Others Honored by Art Festival

by Veronica Vera, with photography by Tom Ziegler

"Theater IS my passion" said Kate Bornstein as she accepted the appropriately titled "Passion Fruit Award" presented by the **Fresh Fruit Festival** in New York City on April 16, 2007. An organization that bestows an honor on Kate Bornstein is one to be reckoned with. The award went to Kate for her outstanding achievement supporting LGBT Arts and culture as a performer, director and mentor. In the words of Fresh Fruit's artistic director Carol Polvar: "If LGBT people don't tell our lives and our history, don't honor our contributions, no one else will and, thus, we will be kept waiting to be invited into a society our art created."

Earlier that same evening, New York City Council Member Alan J. Gerson accepted his Passion Fruit Award, stating that "We in government must never attempt to control the content of art. Our role is to assure that art has a place to live unfettered and free." Gerson saw it as the responsibility of government to provide support for the arts particularly those that represent the city's cultural diversity. The Fresh Fruit Festival does just that. And the roster of performers and honorees who greeted the audience between these two joyful speeches proved it. Actually, everyone was a winner that night, especially the patrons. Ms. Kate and Hon. Alan were the guests of honor, but the smartly designed "Fruitees" were presented to winners in a wide variety of categories and the winners spanned the gender spectrum, with transpeople very well represented. The evening's gracious hostess Ms. Clover Honey, Queen of the Fresh Fruit Festival, sparkled in bright red sequins, like a lush ripe apple. Clover sexily trotted up to the stage, greeted everyone and performed a heartfelt rendition of "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend." The reins of the evening were then picked up by Drag King Murray Hill and we were off and running. Robert Urban, a man of many talents and that evening's music director, once described gender bender Murray Hill as "the cross between the Borscht Belt stars like Pat Cooper and "Pat" from Saturday Night Live. Murray presents himself as "a clueless straight man wandering lost among gays, lesbians and drag queens." His wide lapels, slick side part and burly-que demeanor are links to the past, but what comes out of his mouth is more often juicy and new, definitely fresh fruit. What was striking about the show that night, was the feeling of warmth in the room. Sure awards ceremony are traditionally love fests, but there was a sincerity in the night's proceedings that just made you feel good, or as the goals of Fresh Fruit describe "nurtured and fed by art. " To make sure that no one was underfed, the girls from Crossdressers International, Rita Petite and Madeline passed out cookies, candy bars and plastic fruit leis. Everybody left with something, most important a desire to see and hear more Fresh Fruit.

As the winners in each category were invited to the stage to accept their awards, they sang for their supper, displaying their talents and treating the house to a sample of their talents. Claudia Alick, winner in the directing category encouraged audience participation in her hip-hop poem with a chorus of "Rooted in oppression." The idea that art can be inspired by oppression and then conquer it, reflects the reasoning behind Fresh Fruit. Robert Urban winner of the Spirit Award performed a song parody of what it is to be A Heterosexual Man" and there might have been a few in the audience . . . not counting Murray Hill. Fresh Fruit is determined to honor diversity. Landa Lakes and Samantha Richards represented Native American culture. Grand Duke Lenora Von Elsingberg, N.H. (for non-human) presented the "animated character of distinction" award to Adam Seymour "Queer Duck" Duckstein. Accepting the award for Queer Duck was his creator, Xeth Feinberg. Awards went to modern dance choreographers like Sean Dorsey as well as Kathy Valentine and Anne Rebold whose cabaret act includes Broadway hits and classic standards.

Madeline distributes leis.

Claudia Alick. Inspiration "Raated in Oppression."

Samantha Richards.

Landa Lakes, a former Ms. Gay Indian Nations.

Actress/Singer Laverne Cox was the trophy girl.

Suellen Rubin presents Fruitee to Mike Alba.

This summer's Fresh Fruit Festival 2007 takes place July 22-29 in several NYC venues. Included in the line up is the one person show "Debutante Balls" written and performed by Scott Turner Schofield who comes out as: 1) a lesbian, 2) a redical feminist and 3) a transman. Love Scences, a play by Moe Bertran asks "What does a gay activist, a Broadway producer, a hunky hustler, a guy just coming out at 35, a 60ish martini drinker and a drag queen on her wedding day all have in common?" There will be a tribute to LGBT jazz greats including drag king, Billy Tipton. Clover Honey hosts "the Art of Drag" with a line up of "the most exciting drag talent in town." And the indefatigable Murray Hill hosts an evening of LGBT comics in "Banana 2." These are just some of the performances, the ones that have more of a transgender edge. No doubt there will be additions and surprises. My introduction to Fresh Fruit came in 2005 when I attended "Transgender Rock Explosion" that included the bands Lisa Jackson and the Girl Friday from NYC, VibraLux from Kansas and Georgie Jessup of Delaware and Temptress who in her own words had just been released from Bellevue psychiatric hospital. Fresh Fruit is multi-genre and multi-generational. The Festival invites participants from across the country and around the world, so if you think you would like to know more either as an attendee or a performer, visit *http://www.freshfruitfestival.com.*

Veronico Vero is the founder of Miss Vero's Finishing School for Boys Who Wont to Be Girls, NYC ond outhor of the book of the same nome. Website: www.missvera.com.

Marci L. Bowers, MD

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Dr. Bowers strives to stay connected with the community at conferences and events nationwide:

- Southern Comfort – Atlanta, GA (Sept 07)
- Colorado Gold Rush – Denver, CO (Feb 08)
- California Dreamin' – San Jose, CA (Apr 08)
- Be-All – Chicago, IL (June 08)

Visit our website for up-to-date information on conferences, events and media appearances.

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Photograph by Matthew Schwartz

PAGAN KENNEDY

tells the story of Michael Dillon, The First Man Made Man

interviewed by Larissa Glasser

Pagan Kennedy's self-published zine "Pagan's Head" detailed the thrills and contradictions of city life, and she later became one of the sought-after commentators on retro culture and city life with her books *Platforms* and *Zine. Stripping* and *Spinsters*, works of fiction, gained notice amongst contemporary readers, and her more recent works of nonfiction such as *Black Livingstone* are testament to her development as a writer and historian.

Pagan's new biography of **Michael Dillon**, the first medically-acknowleged FTM transsexual of the 20th century, details the life of an extraordinary spiritualist who sought to overcome life's contradictions

Transgender Tapestry: So who was Michael Dillon?

Pagan Kennedy: Michael Dillon began life as Laura Dillon in 1915. Laura was an orphan, raised by her aunts in a sort of shabby genteel household. She went to Oxford in the 1930s. In 1939, she became the first woman on record to take testosterone with the intention of becoming male. The testosterone worked very, very well. Within a few years, Laura was living as a male towtruck driver named Michael Dillon. In the 1940s, he endured the female-to-male surgical treatments—these were the first in history as well.

Later in life, Dillon lived in India as a Buddhist. Once he had transformed his body, he decided to reshape his mind too. He was a person obsessed with the possibilities of change.

TT: Why do you think so few people know of him?

PK: He worked very hard to hide from the press. The tabloid newspapers outted him in 1958. That's when he fled to India, changed his name to Lobsang Jivaka, and began living in Buddhist monasteries, where he was more or less untraceable.

Unlike Christine Jorgensen – who decided to use her fame as a political platform – Michael Dillon wanted very much to live in obscurity. When you study his life, you realize just what a privilege it is to be invisible, to be allowed to live an ordinary life. He was always at risk of becoming a major media story.

TT: What first drew you to the story of Michael Dillon?

PK: One day, a question popped into my mind: "Who was the first woman to become a man?" So I googled it. And I found that the story was far more interesting and complex than any fiction I could have ever dreamed up.

The conquest of the body proved to be relatively easy. But the conquest of the mind is a never-ending struggle.
—Michael Dillon

TT: Do you see Michael Dillon as a pioneer? His book "Self" certainly appears to be the first published credo for transgender liberation.

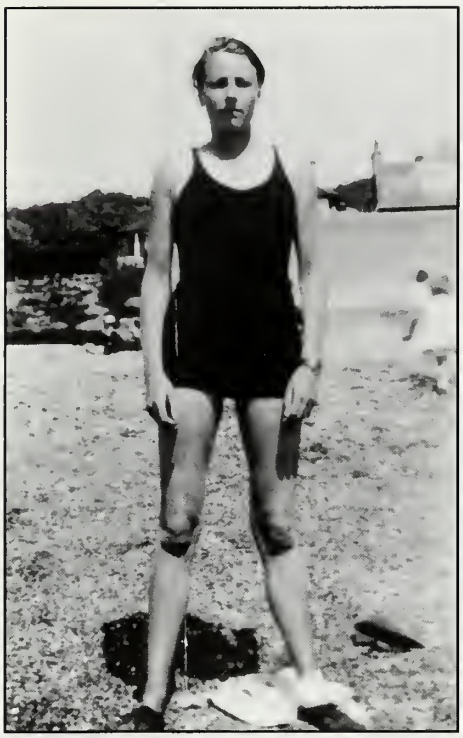
PK: Dillon appears to be the first person ever to argue for the rights of transgendered people in the English language. He should get props just for that.

Laura Dillon, a female student at Oxford University in the 1930s, would have been able to read no medical literature to describe her condition. The word "transsexual" was not yet in use in the English language. She had no way to understand her own alienation from her body and gender role, and so she had to figure it out on her own. In 1939, when she became the first woman ever to take testosterone to become a man, the drug had only been on the market for a year. She took the pills without knowing what they'd do. And they worked miraculously. Within a few years, Laura had transitioned into a tow-truck driver named Michael. So he did more than just pioneer new ideas about the self; he risked his own body to become a man.

TT: Michael Dillon's story touches upon the very human need to belong, to blend in with society while being true to oneself. However, he was dealing with a very close-minded society in post-Victorian England. At what point do you think he became exasperated with his native land?

PK: Dillon became fed up with the British aristocracy. His family had treated him terribly, partly because they saw themselves as above the common lot. His brother, a snob who held a minor title, refused to talk to Michael after his transition.

Toward the end of his life, as he studied to become a Buddhist monk, he had to confront the snobbery that lived inside him. For instance, when he prostrated



Laura Dillon as a tenager.
From the collection of Liz Hodgkinson.

Michael Dillon and his aunt Daisy, 1950.
From the collection of Liz Hodgkinson.

> I try never to "teach" the audience anything, because that simply leads to preachy and dull work. Instead, I want to inspire readers to ask a new set of questions.
> —Pagan Kennedy

himself before Indian monks, he struggled with his own feelings that it was "wrong" for an Englishman to abase himself to a brown person. Eventually, Dillon did overcome his own racism and elitism. He found his deepest moments of happiness working as a "kitchen boy" in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery.

TT: How did you come upon the biographical source material?

PK: I tracked down Dillon's unpublished manuscript, which is sitting in a warehouse in London. I also conducted lengthy interviews with the man who was Dillon's guru in India. And, luckily for me, Dillon published several books during his lifetime, so those were great resources too.

TT: What do you think attacted Dillon so strongly to Buddhism?

PK: Dillon wrote, "The conquest of the body proved to be relatively easy. But the conquest of the mind is a never-ending struggle." He saw Buddhism as his best path to happiness.

TT: What do you think readers can learn from Dillon's story?

PK: When I write a book, I try never to "teach" the audience anything, because that simply leads to preachy and dull work. Instead, I want to inspire readers to ask a new set of questions, to fuel their curiosity and help them to entertain a more complicated world view. With this book, I wanted to throw out big questions about the self.

What is the self? And when we go through a period of "self improvement" or "self transformation," what exactly is happening? How do our previous selves give birth to our future selves? And if we could look at the self under a microscope, would we find anything there?

For decades, scientists have been trying to track down the "gay gene" or the "sex center" or any little dimple of tissue in the brain that explains how we come to be who we are. While these researches will certainly lead to some insights, I'm convinced we're never really going to solve this mystery of what makes us love certain people or feel gendered in a certain way. As Michael Dillon's story shows, while there's a certain stubborn nub of the self, so much about us is in flux.

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Interview with Cheryl Ann Costa, indie filmmaker

by Charmaine Bowes

Many TG people have dreams in life besides the obvious gender related ones. Cheryl Costa has lived out several of hers since her SRS seventeen years ago. After many years as a transgender activist, she switched her energies to show business. In 1993, Cheryl became America's first trans-woman talk radio host in commercial radio. She was a team member on the popular "Working Girls Radio comedy series" until she was offered a solo anchor gig in 1998 hosting a New Age program called the "X-Factor" until 2001. In her spare time she wrote many plays, some of them performed internationally, and started a murder mystery dinner theatre. She spent the last 14 months working on a film as screenwriter and director. We caught up with Cheryl in Syracuse, NY during the peak of New York's record snow fall this past February, to discuss her recently finished film, "The Art of Abundance."

Transgender Tapestry: Is moviemaking your career?

Cheryl Costa: No, movie making is simply a vocation. I used to make professional training and promotional films early in my career. It loses some of its fun and charm when you are trying to pay the rent with it. I'm content to be a vocational film artist and dramatist.

TT: So what's your day job?

CC: Professionally, I'm a Data Security Engineer for an aerospace firm, with whom I've worked for 27 years. I've been a full time telecommuter since 2002, my boss is in Orlando and my customer is in Denver.

TT: Where are you from? How long you have been in New York State?

CC: I was born in Corning, NY, though I left the state after high school. I resided in the Washington, DC metropolitan area since 1986 and just returned to NY in January.

TT: Why Syracuse, New York?

CC: The quality of life in DC has deteriorated since I moved there. As a virtual worker, its irrelevant where I live and where I sit to do my job. So when I heard Dr. Richard Florida speak on his theory of the "Rise of the Creative Class" at the **Out and Equal in the Workplace** conference last year in Chicago, I started reading more. We began to look at Upstate New York as an area that was seeking to grow the sort of artistic and bohemian culture that is friendly to the LGBT community, and had affordable housing to boot. So my partner and I made a leap of faith.

Dr. Kristine Cantrell (Marlie Griffin) tests the regression device.

TT: What made you want to make a film?

CC: I've always liked the arts. An uncle gave me an 8mm movie camera when I was in 8th grade, that's when I got hooked on movies. At university, I majored in cinema and minored in play writing. The problem was film was always so darned expensive to work with. With recent advances in Digital video I felt empowered to make movies that reflected the scope of my story telling vision. A $500k movie on film could now be made for $5k.

TT: Who are your influences? Any particularly favorite directors?

CC: As a film writer Rod Serling; as a film director Alfred Hitchcock and Sydney Pollack.

TT: Have you written any plays or made movies that involve TG issues?

CC: Yes. Back in 1994 I released a play called "A Princess in Training." It was a one woman show that more or less chronicled my life growing up. In 1996, I released a play called "The Berdache" about an intersexed person who tries to join a monastic community. This play was made into an independent video short film in 2000, titled "AMMY," named after the lead character. My most recent but unpublished work is called "The Consultant."

TT: Where did you get the idea for the movie ?

CC: There was this blizzard back in 2000 in Maryland and I spent the snow days watching a bunch of movies on VHS. An off hand remark in one of the films got me thinking about reincarnation and the idea of taking it with you. That line of thinking translated to a lot of scribbling on a pizza box and later the writing of a screen play. The result was a story about a woman who's a wealthy industrialist, who finds out she has a brain tumor and is going to die in a few months. A believer in reincarnation, she hires a fringe new age professor to try and discover who her next incarnation will be, so she can leave her money to herself.

TT: There are a lot of Buddhist themes and characters in the movie. Where did that come from?

CC: Well, I was a Tibetan Orthodox Buddhist nun for about seven years and an ordained Yogi since then. I was still a nun when I wrote the script, so naturally I wanted to have a monastic character as both an in-story subject expert and a plot foil. The Tibetans have a real handle on the death and dying stuff. They clearly seem to understand rebirth and reincarnation and the karmic mechanics of both.

TT: Rebirth and reincarnation, aren't they the same thing?

Dr. Kristine Cantrell (Marlie Griffin) talks to a subject under hypnotic regressian.

Security Admin Tina (Carla Pridgen) preaches the riat act ta a carparate peer.

Mank Yeshi (Chris Kashuba) discusses reincarnation mechanics with Dr. Kristine Cantrell (Marlie Griffin)

CC: Rebirth is something done by all living things including humans, reincarnation is a very focused version of rebirth; it's complicated.

TT: Who are the people in the film? Where did you get the crew? How did you recruit actors, actress and extras? What about their acting skills?

CC: Most the actors in the film are full and part time actors who work in commercials and the industrial film market in the Baltimore / Washington area. In the DC metro area we have an actor's listserv with over 3900 actors and models. I simply posted a casting call and a synopsis of my movie. Within a week I was buried in acting resumes and head shot photos. The crew was recruited from a filmmaker's listserv in the DC area. We had a cast of 25 actors and shoot crew of 6.

TT: I've been told you hired a couple of Trans-woman actresses to appear in the film?

CC: Yes actually. Both actresses were cast in straight roles as genuine women and both women gave us great performances. Carla Pridgen, a stage actress from Asheville, NC was cast in a supporting character role and Autumn Weisz from Maryland, whose credits include "Transamerica" did a cameo. Both actresses prefer to be viewed as female acting talent as opposed to TG.

TT: Where did you shoot the scenes?

CC: We shot the principle core script in my apartment. The original script was a play written for a box theater setting, so we adapted it for an apartment setting. The past and future life flash scenes were shot at locations that include: a Buddhist monastery, a green house, a forest, a Virginia horse farm, a half dozen friends' apartments and even the storage cellar of a community theater company.

TT: What equipment did you use to make the film?

CC: A pair of Canon GL-2s, an HP Media PC, rented lights and a rented shotgun microphone.

TT: Was money the biggest problem in making the film?

CC: Not really, we had carefully budgeted the film. The biggest recurring production expense was food for cast and crew on production weekends. Too often indie production teams only feed cast and crew with junk food.

We are working on a TG based documentary titled "Sex, Gender and the Soul" scheduled to be shot in late 2007.

Our exec producer Linda Poore chose to provide warm, home made food which she cooked herself to save catering costs. That went over very well with our cast and crew and kept them happily coming back. Please keep in perspective; we produced a relatively high quality indie flick for less than the cost of a used car.

TT: What was the most difficult thing about making the film?

CC: Since everyone was a volunteer, we had to shoot on weekends to accommodate everyone's paying jobs. We shot the film over 15 shooting days spread over 5 months. The two biggest obstacles were scheduling around everyone's time and maintaining a continuity of appearance. In one scene, the actors were never in the same room together at the same time and the perspectives of the conversation were shot over six weeks as the actors and stand-ins were available. We put it all together in editing. The finished scene absolutely floored a lead actor who was in the scene.

TT: Describe the schedule of a typical weekend of filming?

CC: Typically it all started with a cast call email to the required cast and crew. The email had a standard form look with directions to my apartment, phones numbers etc. As well it had a call for the specific people required and what specific pages of the script we were planning to shoot. Of course all these people had the schedule and scenes loosely weeks prior to the actual call. A Saturday call was for 8:30am for costumes and makeup. Story board scene briefing stared about 10 am, the actual shooting usually started promptly about 10:30 or 11am. We'd break at 12:30 for lunch and start up again about 1:30pm. We had a very no nonsense approach to the shooting policy. If the cast knew their material and we got our takes, we all went home early. There were some days we all knocked off at 3pm though usually the day was from 8:30am to 5pm. Location calls were similar, we gathered at my apartment, did makeup and costumes then arranged a caravan of cars to drive over to the site for filming.

TT: Are you happy with the finished product?

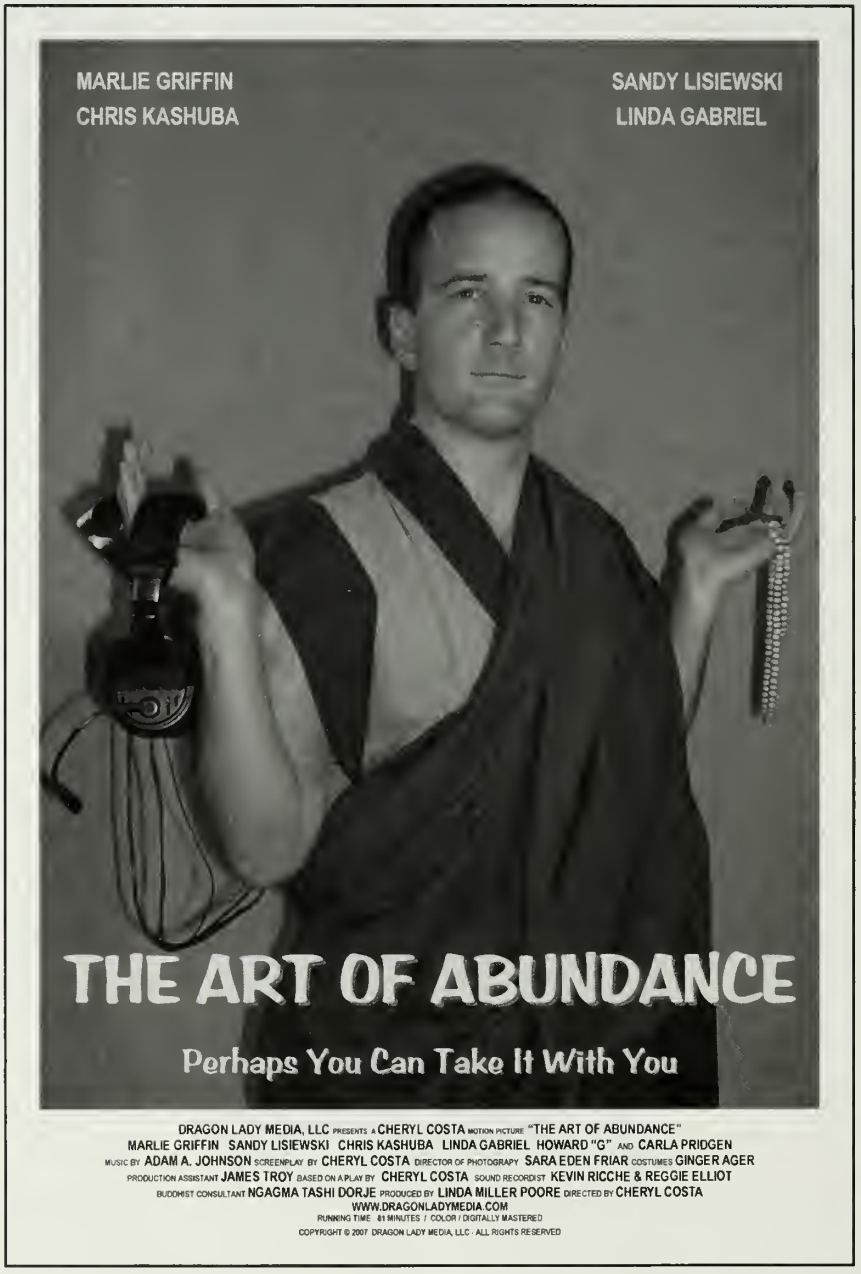
CC: Yes, generally. I mean you can always Monday morning quarterback yourself nit picking this or that to death for slight imperfections that are caused by limits on budget. On the other hand you can sit back, watch it with an audience who says to you afterwards, "Wow what an intense story." I'm very happy with it and encourage people to give it a view.

TT: Did any one get paid?

CC: Not really, everyone did it for the love of the theater craft and for the love of this specific project. Many of the actors loved this non-Hollywood script, with its utter lack of meanness. We gave people a professional big theater screening, a personal copy of the DVD, paid some gas money and fed everyone.

TT: What are your realistic expectations for the film? Do you really think it can make money? How are you going to deal with the distribution?

CC: Realistically, we'll get into a few film festivals, get a little press, generate some buzz in a niche Buddhist-New Age market. Will we make money, YES absolutely, how much is anyone's guess. The key thing here is the movie will be available via home video, that's where the market is. Five years ago, (2000) when I made my film "Ammy" about an intersexed person who tried to join a monastery; there was no outlet besides a few film festivals. A lot has changed in five years. There are now professional web vendors that will take a copy of your master and make it available via on-demand publishing. They'll burn a DVD copy, label it, package it, shrink-wrap it, process the credit card and ship it to the customer and of course send us a percentage off the top each quarter. The spokes person for Custom-Flix, an arm of Amazon commented, "Even crap sells." Our movie isn't junk and there are plenty of people looking for alternative movies.



TT: When will the film be released and where can people buy it?

CC: It's been released to about 30 film festivals since November 2006, should be available as a home video DVD by summer 2007.

TT: I see you are listed on Internet Movie Data Base (*www.imdb.com*).

CC: Actually there are two Cheryl Costa's listed, number one and number two, I'm the second one, listed as a director. The other Cheryl is an actress and was in an early Brad Pitt movie back in the early 90's.

TT: Do you have other projects in the pipeline?

CC: In March / April, we'll be shooting a documentary in Miami with the Cuban Pilots Association, about Cuban freedom pilots. These are guys who flew Migs and crop dusters from Cuba to Florida for freedom, a very heroic bunch. We are working on a TG based documentary titled "Sex, Gender and the Soul." It is scheduled to be shot in late 2007. Finally, a crime drama piece set for production in 2008.

TT: You said you're financed already?

CC: Yes and No. The Cuban movie is on spec. The other two have budget planned and loosely committed.

TT: Tell us about the documentary "Sex, Gender and the Soul."

CC: The concept works like this: for years we've been hearing from the Christian Right about the topic. The documentary gives the religious left a turn at the microphone. We have this Buddhist Yogi who's going to give a teaching and turn the straight community on its ear about GLBT topics.

TT: You mentioned a crime feature with a TG theme?

CC: "The Consultant." It's a crime drama set around a murdered corporate executive who's found all shot up dressed in lacy & racy underwear. The police hit dead ends and in the end it's a TG consultant who helps the police crack the case. It's based on a true story.

TT: Sounds intense.

CC: It is very intense. I'm deep into the rewriting of "The Consultant" script currently. The fun part it's set in the days before CSI, so it takes on a real sleuthing mood and some good real old fashion police work. It also illustrates the risks to dangerous behavior.

TT: Cheryl thanks again for taking time to share with *Transgender Tapestry* readers.

CC: No Charmaine, thank you and the *Tapestry* editorial team. It's organizations like IFGE that promote people like us and help us achieve a platform where we can speak.

Charmaine Bowes *is an indie film aficionado and a GLBT community ally.*
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Suddenly Susan

A conversation with Susan Stanton

by Denise Leclair

Daydreaming during the Thursday luncheon at the Chicago Be-All recently, I received a pleasant surprise. The nice, quiet lady sitting next to me turned out to be none other than the ballistically famous Susan Stanton, former city manager of Largo Florida. Surprisingly, despite her recent notoriety, I would not have known the identity of my dining companion had Olivia, the MC, not asked her to stand up when she was introducing the long list of notables at the conference.

Quickly recovering my composure, I leaned over and introduced myself as she returned to her seat. A journalist is always on the prowl, and I certainly did not want to miss this opportunity. Asking her for an interview, I handed her my business card. She graciously accepted the request—adding one small caveat. CNN was filming a documentary about her, and would I mind if they recorded interview . . .

"Great!" I said, "The more the merrier." Internally I groaned. Actually, I didn't even have enough background information to do justice to this interview, and cosmetically I certainly didn't feel up to being on television, even though the footage will almost certainly end up on the cutting room floor.

After lunch I desperately tried to get on the Internet to get the needed background information (so I wouldn't sound too lame), and attempted to digest as much as I could in the little time I had. As to my appearance—there was probably little I could do without a quick trip to Dr. O. Lacking the requisite time (and money) I freshened up my lipstick instead and said, "Lets roll".

> It's a beautiful case study of what not to do, how not to organize, and what not to say. And that kicked off the journey.

Without getting into too much detail, I will say that few things turn a quiet conversation into a circus more effectively than a television crew. Having a microphone-on-a-stick bobbing up and down over your head, as someone tells you "Pretend it's not there", is just plain distracting. Later I would be glad for that microphone, because my little recorder failed to pick up any of Susan's responses although it got my questions just fine. The gentlemen from CNN graciously allowed me to dub the interview transcript from their soundtrack. You will be able to watch the CNN documentary on Ms Stanton, which may or may not include any of this interview, sometime in 2008.

Transgender Tapestry: You recently interviewed for City Manager of Sarasota, are you still in the running for the position?

Susan Stanton: No, I came close, but I didn't get it.

TT: Many people feel that with your qualifications and with the attention that you're getting now that you have a good chance of being hired by another city that needs someone with your credentials.

SS: We'll see. I guess one of the big factors now is not just the transsexualism—it's the intense media scrutiny. There were literally 10 to 15 different sets of cameras and photographers and reporters all set up (during the job interview), in this huge circle. The city really had to determine: If we select this person can they step away from this?

TT: How long do you think this sort of notoriety is going to follow you around?

SS: Well, I think I went over time on my 15 minutes. (Laughing) I don't know. I thought it would have been over by now, I really did. I don't know what the source of the story is. It seems that whenever I show up in a public function there is a whole group of people with me, so I don't know. I don't know what the source of the interest is.

TT: Do you feel that the media is the biggest obstacle that would interfere with your being able to find employment in your field at this point?

SS: Now with the issue of googling people's names, there's really no way of hiding this type of thing.

TT: No there really isn't, even if you changed your name again.

SS: Well, I thought it would when I went from Stephen to Susan, and now when you google Susan it has actually surpassed Steve Stanton.

TT: Most of the surveys seem to indicate a great deal of public support for you. And a vast majority of the people have said that what happened to you was wrong, but when the hearings happened in Largo most of the people who had their voices heard were opposed. Do you feel that there was some force driving those people to do that?

SS: I'm going to give the honest, but probably not politically correct, answer in the context of this interview. I think that the city commission probably made the decision that nine out of 9.9 city commissions would have done. Given the level of attention, the level of misunderstanding, the negative stereotypes, and the community hysteria that was whipped up, they probably did the most responsible thing by terminating me. It's unfortunate, but I mean—that's the reality today.

TT: In the contract that you had, the city didn't need specific cause in order to dismiss you?

SS: Yeah, a good contract—you can get rid of somebody for good cause, bad cause, or as in my situation, no cause at all. So I really don't hold anything negative against the city commission. It's really an aspect of society's misunderstanding.

TT: In any other position the internal policy of the city itself would have prevented them from doing that to other people.

SS: No, that's not true either, most people confuse a policy with law.

TT: True, a policy is only enforceable by the people who enacted the policy.

SS: So if the city violated its own policies they could have said, "Yeah we violated our policy. Get over it and move on."

TT: But as City Manager could you have held someone else accountable for doing that?

SS: If this had been anything other than an executive level position, I'm pretty confident that the city of Largo would've embraced the diversity, I really am. I probably should be pissed off, angry and bitter, but I'm not. If anything it just really emphasizes to me why I want to continue to be an advocate and provide information that people can be a city manager, be a productive contributing person to society.

TT: Many people were surprised about your decision not to pursue legal redress in this case. I know I watched Larry King and said, "Oh Wow!" It was something I didn't expect. What were your reasons? Apparently you didn't think you had a great case.

SS: We think we could have prevailed under Florida law by various precedential court rulings. There may have been a good potential that our specific district federal level court would have been sympathetic to this case, but my feeling was that you can either litigate or advocate. And once you've set to litigate you can't advocate, because at that point it's all about money. So I think I really felt, and appropriately so, that you can give more by trying to educate without the potential stigma that you're suing somebody. Everybody closes down, everybody starts deposing one another and that becomes a very negative legal process.

TT: It's also not going to do your career any good to be known as the person who litigated this.

SS: Potentially, but you know most people, I think, perceive that what happened in Largo

You can give more by trying to educate without the potential stigma that you're suing somebody.

to be improper. So I don't know if that would have been a profound issue or not. If anything, I've tried to extend some sympathy to my community, to my city commission: that I don't have any ill will. Given the situation at hand I don't think that they necessarily acted irresponsibly.

TT: So you feel that you're a better advocate for the community by keeping this out of the courts because you'll get more sympathy?

SS: I wouldn't say sympathy. I think if you can retain your respect, your self worth, and your dignity as opposed to degenerating down to the "Aw, just sue 'em." People sue each other these days way too fast. I think it's better to advocate and inform than to close it down in a courtroom—now it's a discussion that takes place between a lawyer and judge in the jury. I think the conversations I've had since leaving Largo have had a profoundly larger audience than just a judge, a jury, and a bunch of attorneys.

TT: I'm sure it's surprising to you, but it's also surprising to many of us in the transgender community just how much publicity this received. I think we're used to the injustice being accepted as the status quo. To have people pay that much attention to it is pretty amazing.

SS: That is in some ways unprecedented, I don't know why, I'm just going with the flow as well and so far I'm trying to accentuate the positive. I'm not going to become angry, I'm not going to become bitter, I'm not going to become just a beat and despondent person. It's not my personality or constitution.

TT: And how is your family responding at this point, I would think that they'd be as uncomfortable about all the publicity as they are about the gender issue.

SS: Yeah they are. My wife has been my biggest supporter; she's been there when I needed her. My son is surprisingly doing great. After the story of my situation became public on the front page of the St Petersburg Times and they published my picture, I asked him. "Are you having any problems? Do the kids tease you at school—especially when the picture came out on the front page?" He said "No dad, people say you look really good. They can't believe that's your real hair."

This is a long race, we're going to go

It's not the death sentence that people think it is if a parent comes out as a transgender individual—that it destroys a wife—that it destroys family. It just doesn't have to be that way.

slowly with it, you know he's slowly adapting, it's not going to be easy.

It's not the death sentence that people think it is if a parent comes out as a transgender individual—that it destroys a wife—that it destroys family. It just doesn't have to be that way.

TT: It certainly doesn't. Transgenderism isn't actually the cause of the destruction, its people's beliefs around it that cause most of the problems.

SS: You're absolutely correct, you're right.

TT: Obviously you've known about your feelings for a long time, since you were six or seven years old, which is pretty typical. Most of us are in that same age range when we discover this aspect of ourselves is really fundamental. What were the factors that made you decide that now is the time to deal with this particular issue in your life.

SS: Well, the thing that was the most profound with me a while back, a good friend who was one of my employees, a police officer, committed suicide and I never really thought of suicide as being a logical solution to life's dilemma. Until you reach a point with your own transgender level of understanding. You realize going backwards it's not possible and going forwards has a substantial amount of risk and staying in place is not possible. All of a sudden - all of a sudden suicide becomes a very logical, a very logical option. And that scared me, that I came to the conclusion that you know, that's an option. So I chose life over death.

TT: That's a very sobering thought. The media coverage seems to be focusing on the negative aspects of your experience, what do you see as being positive?

SS: Actually I don't think in the end that the media has focused on the negative aspects, I think that the media has been extremely responsible for the most part. There's not a whole lot of media coverage I've felt I could take exception with, there's always a point here and a point there you take exception with. If anything I think the media has shown somebody who is still a full authentic individual trying to go about putting the pieces of his life together. Going from Stephen to Susan in a way that promotes self-worth dignity and authenticity. So I don't think the media has been negative.

The biggest aspect of negativity has been the selection process in the city of Sarasota, and I still wouldn't say that that was the primary determinant. The person that they chose had a better fit than I did, he got the job based on his merit, I don't know that I was evaluated based on my merit but it's the only thing I can hope for. But certainly the substantial media coverage interjected an element that none of the other five had to contend with. If I'm an official I'm certainly going to be concerned that, if I select this individual, is this media frenzy going to go away or not. That has been the only negative. But there's been far greater positive media understanding and exposure following the story, than the other way around.

TT: Of course, the obligatory question is: What would you have done differently?

SS: It's a beautiful case study of what not to do, how not to organize, and what not to say. And that kicked off the journey.

The news conference that the city developed, based upon the desire to inform and educate was substantially damaging. So how does somebody in a very high profile position deal with this type of a disclosure? Unfortunately, when we as a city, as well as me as individual, reached out to a number of sources, there was nobody that knew how to do it. And nobody gave me any advice—nobody had any experience. So in some ways not one person has experience.

I can say, "I don't know necessarily what will work, but what I did didn't work for the following reasons . . ." And it was all captured in living color. It's all on tape for future analysis and constructivity, and hopefully people can benefit by it and the next person who does this will know not to do it this way. In fact I have had numerous conversations with people since this time and suggested "Do it

like this . . ." and so far so good.

TT: The "Daily Show" coverage was, to put it mildly, quite irreverent. They were sort of faking poking fun at you but it really seemed that they were poking fun much more at the people who were small minded about this. How did you feel about that?

SS: I didn't like the production it all. I don't want my city that gave me 17 years of gainful employment stigmatized about what they did. So in that sense I thought it was not a good idea. I never saw the "Daily Show" before. I remember people indicating how the younger folks get so much of their news through that channel, so I did that. I thought that their depiction of me was very derogatory almost degenerational towards trans-people in general, as well as the ending where they cut off Florida. I understand what they were trying to do, but I didn't think it was cute at all. And that production took almost 3 1/2 hours to shoot.

Sometimes you're surprised, and sometimes you're disappointed. Although the people that decide thought it was great, the younger people were educated and a lot of folks said shame on Largo. And I guess there's an element of productivity there, though certainly not my desire. I did not want to poke fun at my committee, my community, my commission, or be belittled by the news crew.

TT: I think the loyalty that you've shown to Largo is exemplary and they should really be glad of how you handled the whole thing.

SS: I don't know about exemplary. I mean, you're talking about someone who has been given 17 years of gainful employment with a first-class community that will embrace diversity and will be better as a result of this experience. I loved Largo before this thing started and I still have affection for the community four months later.

TT: Totally off the subject; do you like to scuba dive? There is Pennecamp Park off the coast, do you have activities like that that you like to focus on?

SS: I do, of course the Largo that you're referring to is in the Keys, and we're nowhere near the Keys. We're like 400 miles in the other direction. I did scuba dive, in fact I dive every other week at a local aquarium, and I do get out in the ocean. My son is now a certified scuba diver, so yeah I do all that. I have to get a new wet suit because it's not designed for . . . It has changed and the fit becomes extremely uncomfortable, especially when you're underwater and under pressure. Things are compressed that used to not be there, but other than that it's been great. I dive a lot, and I run. I've had to change the way I do that as well. There have been some life changes.

You can either litigate or advocate.

TT: I guess you'll have more time to explore some of those activities.

SS: (Laughs) Actually I have not. Since being fired in February it's been a nonstop, nonstop. I've not had a single day where I could take a book and plop down on the beach and just sun my body. I've been on the road. It's been nonstop and the other day I was just exhausted. In this conference I've been falling asleep a couple times.

TT: I think that's forgivable.

SS: Well, no not really but I'm just tired. I can tell I'm tired.

TT: Are you hoping to stay in this specific field, or are you considering other options going forward.

SS: Yeah, I'm considering other things, I'm not really sure. One of the neat things about Sarasota is that I do plan on moving into the community. I'm already getting a lot of different people in the community saying, "Can we talk?" "Let's get together and do some brainstorming."

TT: You're moving to Sarasota?

SS: Yeah, I met more people in Sarasota. They have a very active LGBT community in the city of Sarasota that reached out to me. I've been shown such kindness by the community that I want to make Sarasota my home. Whether I get the job as city manager or become a resident of the community I think they won and I think maybe I won as well. So we had two winners in the selection process.

TT: And hopefully you got a decent severance package from Largo?

SS: I got 12 months worth of pay, and that was a lot of money I guess. But the clock is ticking. We're going to have to maintain two households soon. I've tried to emphasize that most people who are transgender don't have a severance package—don't get a couple hundred thousand dollars on the way out, and don't have the opportunities that I have had since I've been terminated. To most people it's a death sentence. So hopefully my level of activity, my communication, my ability to stay on the national stage and talk about this will make it easier for others who aren't as fortunate as I have been.

TT: Those are all the questions. You've been wonderful, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate you're doing one more interview.

SS: No, that's great. I've read "Tapestry" over the years. It's a great magazine and I think it balances education yet with a little bit of fun and it's informational as well.

The Confession of a Crossdresser

by Sharon Morgan

Sharon Morgan, IFGE's oldest member, passed away this year. At 101 years old, she was well in the lead, ahead of even Virginia Prince who is only a youthful 94. Until just a few months before her death she had been one of our most loyal bookstore customers as well, ordering several new titles every few months. She was a pioneer in her own way, publicly claiming her feminine identity even as she resided in a VA retirement home. We have included these three items about her, including a previous published piece about her under the pseudonym Jane.

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While writing the story of my life from birth until reaching the age of ninety, vague hints included a promise that my life contained a secret that might be told and revealed in a sequel publication. The following is a revelation of that once closely kept and guarded secret! From a very early age, before reaching my fifth year to be exact, a chance happening registered itself upon my young mind. This was seeing my mother being laced into her corsets by a neighborhood lady. Although unknown at the time, this was the beginning of my life as a transvestite and becoming a transgenderist!

Seeing the laces of my mother's corset being tightly drawn, the thought flashed on my youthful mind saying, "That's for me!" My mother passed away shortly thereafter, but I have often wondered what might have been the outcome, once she learned of my desire. My dad was a womanizing drunk and was absent for long periods of time, raising the thought that my mother might have dressed me as a girl during those early years, even raising me as such!

After my mother's demise, I was taken to be raised by an Aunt and Grandmother who resided out in the country; these two ladies were the sister and mother of my mother. At first they did not know of my desire, but in an upstairs loft of an outbuilding was an old trunk filled with abandoned clothing, books and other items, among which was a pair of corsets. Many long hours were spent up in that old loft wearing my new found item of women's attire that would in later years cause me to become a transgenderist spending every hour dressed as a woman.

Once the two ladies that were raising me learned what I was doing, corsets were worn at all times beneath my boys clothes with the exception of school days. Just as soon as I arrived home, my corsets were donned and were of course a part of my attire throughout the weekend!

No punishment nor ridicule was ever suffered by my wearing corsets, which has caused me to think and wonder if there was another in my family that liked to dress and wear woman's clothing, or perhaps they knew of someone with a like desire when they resided elsewhere before my appearance on the scene!

I would often coax my Aunt into letting me put on her corsets, which were too large, I still loved wearing them. Another thought causes me to wonder why those two fine ladies did not purchase corsets for me. Even though we were not rich people, there were ways and means that corsets could have been added to my wardrobe. The cost in those days were no more than $3.00 which today begin at $100.00 per pair!

Another thought is, what did those two fine ladies think at the time? There weren't such things as psychiatrists in those days nor anyone else who might be concerned with ideas or desires such as mine; besides my people would not have spent their hard earned money to learn about or correct this fault — if it is a fault!

I am and have always been an avid reader and spent much time at various farmhouses, looking for old magazines; for back in those days nothing was ever thrown away, regardless of what it was. It was simply stowed in attics or buildings within reach of home or barn.

Besides my reading, what was really being searched for were discarded corsets and one bitterly cold day, I was going through some magazines stored in the basement of a farmer who within the next two years would become my employer. Lo and behold, there across the basement was the very item so avidly sought! This item was hurriedly hidden between a few magazines and away I went!

At a distance of perhaps 200 yards, from my find and there being no other buildings within at least a half mile I was unable to wait until arriving home and trying on my newly found treasure! Slipping and sliding down an almost perpendicular hill below the road I dropped my clothing despite the freezing cold and hooked those corsets around my waist and they fit wonderfully!

I was in Seventh Heaven, wearing my corsets almost 24 hours each day, even going to bed wearing them, to waken later to find my corset laces loosened, supposedly by my dear old Grandmother. No reason was ever given for her so doing, although it could have been the fear of my developing a wasp waist or hourglass figure, but that too is mere supposition!

I had reached the age of 16 and one evening while hanging around the small country store, a man rode up and asked if there was anyone looking for work. No one was, and knowing that I might be ridiculed on account of the dislike felt for father; his kids were looked down upon and referred to as those "Morgan Brats," I started towards home, with the idea of asking that dairy farmer for a job, without those store loafers knowing of my intentions. As he rode by, I asked if he would hire me. He would and did at $20.00 per month, plus room and board.

This was a "Gold Mine" in my young life, for the only money I had ever earned was from the few muskrats and an occasional skunk or two plus working for a man for $0.50 per day. It is no longer remembered whether my first very own corsets were purchased from my first pay or not, but nevertheless a note was written supposedly by my Aunt to the small clothing store. My note read: "Please give the bearer of this note a pair of back-lace corsets," and was signed by my aunt.

About one mile from town a repetition of that cold winter day took place, the only difference being that the day was a warm spring

morning! There was a small concrete bridge that spanned a small stream that carried flood waters and was mostly dry during other times. The horses were tied to a small tree or fence post and going beneath this small bridge, my corsets were clasped around my waist: what a heavenly feeling. Whether this was caused by owning my own corsets or what and they were worn every day except perhaps a few (one of these became fatal!)

There was one thing that went unnoticed at the time, which was when I was neatly corsetted, my waist was but 18 inches. This had not been strived for or even thought about until many years later when it was too late to own an hourglass figure.

My note read: "Please give the bearer of this note a pair of back-lace corsets," and was signed by my aunt.

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Now comes what was a disaster. The sister of my employer, was a school teacher, home for summer vacation. While cleaning my room and making my bed, she noticed my corsets which were not being worn that day in a valise open under my bed. As we all sat down at the supper table, she blurted out loud, asking me how my corsets fit! Had there been a hole in the floor, I most surely would have crawled through it!

I quit my job, went home to my Grandmother no more than a half mile distant; why God only knows, for she said not one single word of either advice or criticism. A year elapsed, with my taking teasing from everybody until one rainy morning, I pulled foot and left the old homestead, never to return!

Again, in looking back down through the years, it is wondered what may have resulted, had I remained in the locality. Would all the furor have died down and would I have become an eccentric who liked to wear dresses and was never thought about openly.

In closing out this phase of my life, my 18 inch waist is now 26 inches and that is not too bad considering the years of hard work and much more that has transpired.

The Challenge of Finding a Home: A Cross-Dressing Elder Veteran's Story

by Alison Laing

Jane was in her early 70s when I first heard from her. She was proud to be a veteran of World War II. Her adult life had been marked by a strong will and by the courage to dress in women's clothing when she wanted.

It started out as a routine pen-pal exchange, but became an interesting project in dealing with a transgendered older man who was frustrated by lack of opportunity to express his feminine persona. To preserve the elder's anonymity, let's use the name "Jane"—and to respect this individual's self-expression, let's employ female pronouns.

Jane was in her early 70s when I first heard from her. She was proud to be a veteran of World War II. Her adult life had been marked by a strong will and by the courage to dress in women's clothing when she wanted. But now Jane was living in a veterans retirement home, and this put a big damper on her cross-dressing activities. She could write letters about her situation to friends or dress privately in her limited wardrobe late at night—that's all.

Most of her letters to me condemned the world and especially the transgendered community for not caring about her and other elders like her. In my replies, I tried to cheer her up and to suggest activities that she might find pleasure in doing as Jane. I had little success. Although she continued to write, she expressed a most unhappy attitude.

Jane also must have been a bit cantankerous, as she was constantly in trouble with the veterans home administration. At one point she left the home—by mutual agreement, I gathered. She tried living with a much younger transsexual, sharing the cost of an apartment and getting the roommate to drive her around as needed.

The situation lasted for a while, until Jane realized that it was not stable and would eventually end; her roommate had her own life to deal with and could not be a caregiver to an older person. Jane then went to a commercial retirement home in a delightful area, but she still complained. I was able to visit her at this location once. Although it was very clean and charming, Jane felt very stifled.

Jane began to have some health problems and ultimately ended up in another veterans home. By then, she was approaching 80 and was determined to dress. She began doing so during the day—at first, only in her room. The nurses smiled and seemed to go along with it, but the orderlies were apparently snide and cold. Jane wanted to go to lunch and social activities—bingo, movie parties—in her feminine clothes. The situation blew up and the nursing home administration prohibited her from cross-dressing publicly.

Jane did have one ally in the system: a visiting social worker who understood this phenomenon well enough to know that it had to be dealt with. At one point I talked with this person, who also put me in touch with one of the administrators. We all agreed that Jane must be allowed to express this part of her life; it had been too long suppressed, and she wanted to have her way during her final years.

A DIFFERENT FEMININE ROLE ALMOST EVERY MONTH . . .

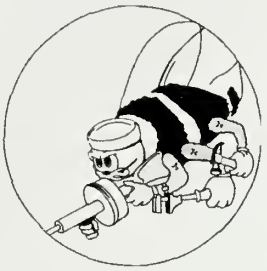
We came up with an approach that would make Jane more presentable: The nurses helped Jane develop "costumes." This was great, as there was a seasonal holiday party every month. Jane became Mrs. Santa Claus, the Valentine Girl, the Easter Lady, a glamorous witch named Aunt Samantha—a different feminine role almost every month—and she became an accepted sight around the home.

Jane's letters to me became more upbeat. She became a contributor to the home's newsletter. And with her feminine side acknowledged, she actually chose to wear male attire with her service medals on Memorial Day! I think she may even have smiled once in a while.

After losing contact with Jane for many years, I tried to track her down in the course of writing this story. I'm delighted to say that not only is she in fairly good health at age 94, but she now dresses full time with the blessing of the veterans home staff and most of the other residents.

Alison Laing is a transgendered elder who is active with the ***International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE)****. She lives in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. For information on IFGE visit the group's website at www.ifge.org.*

AROUND THE GROUNDS
National Seabees Commander Meets Morgan



"It was so crowded. I found a place to sleep on a conveyor belt in one of the gun turrets."—Jim Morgan

During July, Ed Janes, Natianal Cammander, Navy Seabee Veterans af America came ta the hame ta meet Jim Margan ane af the aldest Seabees in the nation. During the visit Jones interviewed Margan, which was taped and sent ta the Natianal Histarian far inclusian in the histary af the Seabees.

Margan stated that he first jained the Navy in 1923 and served abaard the Battleship WYOMING. He was discharged after ane "hitch" in the "Old Battle Wagan Navy." The late twenties being the depressian years, it was very hard ta find a jab, but Margan cantinued ta travel fram place ta place keeping emplayed mast af the time. One day he discavered a sign that allawed ex-service persannel back in at their previaus rank ar rate, and affered a 16 year retirement pragram. Margan jained the Army Air Carps as a supply sergeant. In 1941 he again

NSVA Natianal Cammander *Ed Jones presents Jim Morgan with severol keepsakes fallawing a taped interview sessian lost July.*

received his discharge and went ta wark in the defense industry in Springfield, MA. But, again cauld nat resist temptatian. "I was walking by a Navy recruiting affice, the next thing I knaw I'm in the Seabees—Third Class Carpenters Mate," Margan said.

After receiving his training, Morgan was shipped aut ta the Pacific Theater with the 128th NCB. He served an detachments in the Philippines,Samar, Saipan and was hame based at Guam. With the end of hostilities, he and abaut 1,000 Seabees were put abaard the Battleship PENNSYLVANIA which was being sent back ta the states far repairs. "It taak 23 days and was so crawded. I faund a place ta sleep on a canveyar belt in ane af the gun turrets." he said.

Fallawing the interview, Janes presented Margan with several keepsakes; a certificate, a new Seabee hat and pin. Glaria Janes NSVAA Natianal Vice President and twa members af the Washington Auxiliary, Vyvian Davidsan and Pat Suess alsa attended the interview sessian. Margan then taak them all an a taur af the facility.

WaVeHo Warrior *was the newsletter for the Washingtan Veterans Hame.*

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The 'Z' Chromosome

by Joan Hoff

Help me. Help me. I'm a man trapped in a man's body.

Oh, if only that super special hybrid sperm with the Z Chromosome had united with my mother's fertile ovum at my conception, I could have been a man in a woman's body; the best of two worlds as far as I am concerned. I could wear girl's/women's clothes without ever having to suffer the pangs of guilt and shame; suffer the devastating fear of being discovered and ridiculed; nor live with the resulting frustration and anger. The mere idea of being a little girl wearing frilly dresses and having my blond hair combed, curled and adorned with bows and ribbons is beyond description only to be surpassed by my transition into adulthood where a bra, stockings, and high heeled shoes would be standard fare. As a girl/woman I would be free to express my spirit and emotions in a multitude of ways; ways denied to boys/men. I could cry publicly with neither shame nor ridicule. It would be a girl thing. I could wear just about any style or color of clothing that my mood may have deemed appropriate without fear of criticism. Boys/men, in contrast, wear uniforms.

No longer would my male mind be bogged down with the overriding thoughts of expressing my femininity at the expense of starving it of life expanding ideas; ideas that would allow me to concentrate on improving my life and well being. The mental anchor chain would be severed, allowing me to sail free on the sea of life.

The Z Chromosome however, would present some very interesting situations, conundrums, and enigmas in my life. As a man in a woman's body, I would not have any deep desire to have relations with a man (though I have been exceptionally envious of the woman's total body orgasm), nor to become a mother. The very thought of conceiving a child, carrying it in my womb for nine months, giving birth, suckling him/her for at least a year or more, and most odiously, changing diapers, is foreign to my male emotional make-up. But, as a girl, would I be able to plays girl's games on a steady diet without losing my alleged mind? You know, playing house, dressing the cat in doll clothes and wheeling it around in a baby carriage, etc, etc. Dress-up would be a completely different story though. However, I could play baseball with the boys without shame. I would be hailed as a Tom Boy. Just imagine what would happen if I, as a boy, would play house with the girls, cuddle dolls, and dress-up in my mother's/sister's clothes. No words could adequately explain the adverse ramifications.

Would this paradox of being a boy in a girl's body scramble my brain even further than it is now? Since my brain would not be functioning in a female mode (hopefully), would the other girls accept me as a girl, or would they ostracize me? What would happen at puberty when the female hormones start to rampage through my body; my fertility affirmed every month; and my body changes from childhood to womanhood? How excited would I be when my mother introduces me to my first training bra? These emotions are certainly a far cry from my male experience of growing hair on my chest and face and experiencing nocturnal emissions.

As an adult woman with a man's brain, I could pursue a career in engineering, science, law, or even the military, and I would be revered as a pioneer in Women's Rights, breaking down the barriers of sex discrimination in the work place and breaking the glass ceiling. The joke, of course, would be on them since I would really be a liberated man in a woman's body, free to chart my career without having to prove that I was a man.

Oh Z Chromosome, where were you when I needed you?

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FAR LEFT: Lek P. Customer service representative, Krung Thai Bank
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Bird / Kajornsak with Award / Lisa and Josie / Lorraine, her Husband, her Son / Kajornsak's shop window / Three girls in office of Dr. Suporn

Eastern Exposure:

My Travels through Thailand and New Zealand

written with photography by Mariette Pathy Allen

I left for Thailand on January 13th, arriving in Bangkok 17 hours later. Dr. Suporn's clinic sent a mother and and her teenage daughter to meet me at the airport. I was surprised right from the start as I suspected that "Bird", the daughter was "Katoey". I came to Thailand to photograph and be an additional support person to Lisa and Josie, a couple from the LA area who have been together since they were 16 and now have three adult children. Lisa was on the SWAT team with the LA police and retired after 20 years.

My sense of the people, other than their beauty, is that they are friendlier and kinder than most.

Dr. Suporn is a specialist in sex reassignment surgery who has developed his own one step proceedure which he wouldn't allow me to photograph. His patients come to Chonburi from all over the world, but primarily from the West: Australia, Austria & Germany, the US. Life revolves around the Mercure Hotel where we all stay, which is practically around the corner from the clinic, where you can get the greatest Thai ice tea, as well as lots of companionship if you want it. The hospital, where you stay for a week after your surgery, is about 15 minutes away in harrowing traffic. Patients go there by van. Those of us who want to visit at unusual times, take the "tuk tuk", a brightly painted vehichle with a motor but the back is open and rather wagon-like. You're flanked by motorcycles and cars that don't stop for pedestrians. To cross the street, you climb up (and down) steep steps leading to a bridge-a little like Las Vegas.

As it turned out, Bird's mother is one of Dr. Suporn's nurses, and Bird is Kathoey.(The traditional Thai word for a male-bodied, female-identifying person who is attracted to men). She knew she was at an early age but made it official when she was 16 and could change her school uniform. She and her friends (about 25 of them) did not experience any special teasing in school and get together all the time. Of the friends I've met, Bird is the only one who speaks any English, so communication is very hard. I have photographed them some, but would like to do more before I leave on Thursday.

Lisa and Josie are doing very well considering that Lisa had chest augmentation as well as srs. Josie, Lisa'a wife, is at her side all the time, and their three children are in constant communication. This is an amazing family! It feels a little like a commune here. Most people stay for a month, and frankly, Chonburi isn't the most interesting place but the staff is wonderful, and so are many of the patients. Dr. Suporn works in an all female environemnt of beautiful young Thai administrators and nurses, his

wife, and his patients! The only other intentional male on the premises is the van driver, and an occasional support person such as someone's boyfriend or brother.

I took two short trips: to Pattaya and to Bangkok. Pattaya is where Lorraine Baskerville lives now. She came to Thailand a few years ago for srs (with a different surgeon). While touring around, her atm card got swallowed up. The bank guard saw Lorraine's despair and came to her rescue. They married in a Buddhist ceremony with all his family present! Since her husband speaks very little English, Lorraine has been learning Thai, and has a job teaching English in an elementary school. We went on an "elephant trek". I wouldn't have called it that as we just walked around some slightly uneven terrain and looked down on people living in tin shacks. The odd thing is that no matter how decrepit the living spaces were, there were motorcycles and even vans parked next to them. I've ridden many horses, a camel (in Egypt) but never an elephant. I found it somewhat uncomfortable and rhythmically unpredictable—maybe because the elephant wanted to stop and eat whenever possible, and really didn't want to go out on the highway. I think he was right.

Lorraine took me to see the "Golden Buddha" and the spirit houses all around. The huge Buddha was surrounded by 7 smaller Buddhas, each representing a day of the week and each in a different pose. BTW the days of the week have lucky colors. Monday is yellow. Since the Thais seem to love their king and queen, and the king was born on Monday, everyone can be seen in yellow on Monday. Tuesday is pink, Wednesday, green, Thursday, orange, and Friday is blue, the day the Queen was born. Saturday, purple, Sunday, red.

Lorraine and her husband and I went to Pattaya's red light district which is so popular that it's closed off to traffic. It's a feast of neon, of generally older Western men, and throngs of georgeous Thai women, including Ladyboys. Las Vegas, Disneyland, but not the old Times Square as it's too obvious and upbeat for that.

I loved Bangkok. I had the pleasure of spending two evenings with Jonathan Murray, Felicia's brother, who has lived there for 20 years, speaks Thai, and works in conservation, specializing in animal research. With Jonathan, I saw some of Bangkok's nightlife. We even went to a ladyboy cabaret. Unfortunately, I wasn't allowed to photograph it. I could have paid the bar fine to borrow one of the performers, and then paid her extra for her time. I actually considered doing that but wasn't sure where and how I would work with her.

Bangkok is a mixture of precious national treasures such as the Golden Palace and the Emerald Buddha, a range of architecture influenced by Chinese, Cambodian, Vietnamese styles, gigantic shoppng emporiums which you reach by sky train, a bright and sunny, utterly quiet elevated train. Everywhere in Thailand, as Lorraine says: "dogs rule!" Stray dogs wander all over the streets. They are flea-bitten mangy looking things. It's startling after enjoying all the cute pets walking along on leashes on the streets of NYC. There doesn't seem to be any zoning in Thailand. Tin shacks face condos. A mansion is barely a block away from what looks like a slum. Food vendors cook outside, blocking half the sidewalk, motorcycles might take up another portion of the sidewalk. You squeeze by.

I had planned on going North to Chiang Mai and other areas. After much agonizing indecision, I decided to spend most of my time here because this feels like where my work is. I want to come back to Thailand soon and really see it. I appreciate being in a place so different from anything I have known (except perhaps Egypt). I also feel the importance of Buddhism here-95% of the people identify as Buddhists. My sense of the people, other than their beauty, is that they are friendlier and kinder than most. I haven't felt any hostility directed at me at any time, or at other foreigners. The way people greet each other with a prayer-like bow and smile, is inspiring.

I left Thailand on February 1st, arriving in Wellington, NZ on February 2nd.

Texas Starr, aka Texas Tomboy met me at the airport and shepherded me around for the next 9 days. Tex, originally from guess where?, is a San Francisco transplant who wants to live permanently in NZ, which isn't so easy. Even though there are only 4 million people in NZ, immigration looks for people who are teachers, nurses, or builders, are young, rich, or possibly all of the above. Nobody is to take a job away from a Kiwi.

I lived alone in a house in the hills with a grand view of the harbor. Claudia and Janet, the couple who run "Agender", a tg support group, were in Australia, so I enjoyed their home and art the whole time I was in Wellington.

The air, the water, the earth, even the cities of NZ smell clean, fresh, pure. There are no billboards on the roads, and no snakes in the grass, or anywhere else. Keeping the ecology consistent is a national goal; opposums snuck in somehow, and overbred. They're hunted and possom fur, which is warmer than wool, is among the knit exports. It's quiet in NZ. People don't talk on cellphones, they text message. They tend not to yell or honk their horns too much.

I continued my exploration of what it means to be transgendered in traditional, non-Western cultures.

Nature is magnificently present everywhere you go, and the cities tend to have unique character. A lot of the old houses are preserved and spruced up. Small towns and villages also have a lot of character and kept fooling me into thinking this was a much older and more populated country.

Through Tex, I was able to spend time and to photograph a variety of people, including Maori, Samoan, Cook Islander, and British descendants. I continued my exploration of what it means to be transgendered in traditional, non-Western cultures. As I'm such a novice, I wonder if I've embarked on an anthropology course and if that will interfere with or supplement my photography.

When I left Wellington, on February 11th, my drifting time ended: I joined a bus tour that started in Christchurch on February 12th, on the South Island, and ended in Auckland, on the North Island, 17 days later. My friend Kate, from Santa Monica, wanted to celebrate her 60th birthday in a beautiful place, and asked me to join her. The wake up call for February 13th was 5:45am! Via bus, train and helicopter, we found ourselves on top of the Franz Joseph glacier, on the Southern Alps, treading hesitantly on the crunchy snow, astonished by the vastness of it all.

Before long, another helicopter landed, then another. Then I realized that's what constitutes touring! We travelled by bus through magnificent places: forests, fields, lakes,

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT (all Thailand): Kajornsak with dress / Larraine / Miyuki with laptop / Lisa, Miyuki, and Groce / Lisa post-surgery / Lisa going in for surgery

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT (all New Zealand): Nicola and Tex / Viane, Tex, and Daeran / Performer, "On the Corner," Wellington / Niki with motorcycle / Candice and Talia

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP (all New Zealand): Candice and Talia / Dana with her dogs / Georgina Beyer / Nicola and Tex

OPPOSITE PAGE Wellington, New Zealand

mountains. When there were "scenic views", bathroom or lunch breaks, we found ourselves shadowed by other tour buses, sometimes just like ours. Most of the time we spent only one night at each hotel, and most mornings, the wake up call was between 6 and 7. I got into the rhythm and started eating too much—it was all there in front of me. Besides, NZ ice cream is really good!

The highlights of the tour for me were sheep or cow related: a home stay with dairy farmers, watching border collies at work as herders, seeing sheep being sheared. Sheep become totally passive when they're put on their backs. They look out at the world dolefully. I enjoyed a numer of boat trips and saw dolphin playing. Although created for tourists, I also really appreciated the Maori cultural events in which there was much re-enactment, in song, dance and storytelling, of Maori tradition.

By the time the bus trip ended, Kate and I had made some friends, and had developed a sense of the beauty of the country and friendliness of the people. I appreciated not having to worry about luggage or logistics, but I did feel a bit like a sheep, following along, peeing when I was told to.

I was happy to move into Harvey Benge's house in Auckland. He is a photographer and friend whose family came to NZ many generations ago. It was a pleasure being in an original environment surrounded by art and by Harvey and his well-established, charming friends. Although I was experiencing a lot of pain in my lower back and legs, and not able to walk around Auckland as much as I would have liked, I felt sorry that my trip had come to an end.

Well, almost. It took me almost two days to get home. Twelve hours from Auckland to Bangkok, 17 from Bangkok to JFK, an hour to get my luggage, another hour to get home, as I arrived in time for morning rush hour.

Mariette Pathy Allen's books of photography include The Gender Frontier and Transformations: Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them.

Out with Miss Vera

by Veronica Vera

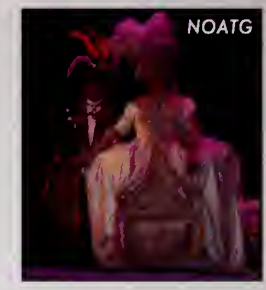
Anyone who is trans knows how important a camera can be. With a camera you can document who you are at your most beautiful, your most excited. You have souvenirs of cherished moments that you can live and relive. Lately, I've been taking my digital camera with me everywhere and I found myself inspired to share these experiences with you, for your education and entertainment. Some pics were snapped during the visit of student Chrissy Sue, who came at a particularly festive time of year and was crazy for her "photo ops." After Chrissy left, I just kept snapping or being snapped by others. I hope this will be the first of more such reports to you. For those of you who are computer savvy, I've provided web addresses, so you can do more research. Perhaps, one day I'll add this feature to my website, as well, but there is nothing that can replace the fondle factor, the thrill of having a great magazine like *TG Tapestry* in your hands. Enjoy these field trips!

A FIRM FOUNDATION

On her first visit to the Academy it was clear Chrissy Sue needed more than just moral support. Her wardrobe consisted of just a few ruffled panties. So off we went to Frishman's (*www.frish.com*) the tg friendly lingerie store in the Bronx. Frishman's was founded by owner **Sandi Simon**'s father Sol in 1932 ago and tg girls are always welcome. There's even a special section dedicated to you on the shops website. **Chrissy Sue** entered with less wardrobe than Li'l Orphan Annie. By the time we departed her curves had been stuffed into a silky all-in-one; her waist tamed by a rubber cincher; those baggy blue jeans ditched for velvet skirts and ruffled blouses and a smile that spread from new earring to new earring. She needed plenty of outfits for the adventures to come.

DO GOOD AND LOOK FABULOUS

That's the motto of the **Imperial Court of New York** (*www.icny.org*) which sponsors Night of A Thousand Gowns (NOATG). Each spring this lavish drag ball and coronation ceremony is also a coming out party for Academy debutantes. Over 1000 people in splendid and imaginative ensembles fill the grand ballroom of the Marriott Marquis hotel. The tiaras nearly reach the chandeliers. Guests at our Academy table included students Chrissy Sue and **Rayla** who sparked a great friendship and afterward made a date to attend an imperial coronation in Reno together. We were also joined by academy graduates **Patti Harrington** and **Gayle Candy Love** both, of whom I wrote about in *Miss Vera's Crossdress For Success.* Since that writing Patti, a transwoman, is now a full time law student. Gayle, whose " fantasy wedding" I described in detail in that book recently came out to her wife. Her secret was accepted with love, so Gayle was extremely relieved and emotionally, a new woman. **Miss Deborah**, our dean of cosmetology never misses a ball and my dear friend **Amy Rosmarin** has become a regular attendee as well. Both women wear outfits that we all envy. This year my dear friend **Vanessa Del Rio**, the famous adult movie star graced our table. A coffee table book about her life in pictures, entitled *Fifty Years of Slightly Slutty Behavior* is just published by Taschen and available at Amazon in limited edition. The soft cover is $400, hardcover $1000! A new student Andrew dressed in a tux and flirted with lovely Cristina from Pilgrim Telephone, sponsor of my new phone line. Andrew was like a kid in a candy store. He told Cristina he was straight so she was surprised when she noticed he was dancing with his hands on another guy's bottom. Well, it's just that kind of night, when corsets are laced tight but inhibitions are let loose.



Each year, NOATG raises thousands and thousands of dollars for LGBT charities. It you've ever dreamed of being Cinderella at the ball, this unforgettable event is for you. And you don't have to spend a mint to look like a million. Miss Deb and I took Chrissy shopping in Macy's very reasonably priced women's department. I bought my dress and tiara and opera length gloves for all us girls on ebay (*www.ebay.com*).

LEFT TO RIGHT, Top Row: Visiting Royalty / Blondes came in all sizes / Tats, Spec and Tiaras / Patti Harrington / Chrissy Sue meets Mariette Pathy Allen / Miss V and Helen Boyd
LEFT TO RIGHT, Bottom Row: Miss Deb and Amy / Vanessa Del Rio and her man Vito / Kate Barnstein and Barbara Carrellas / Hostess Dr. Jamie Kaufman surraunded by handsome guests

HELEN BOYD SCORES AGAIN

Have you picked up your copy of *She's Not The Man I Married*, Helen Boyd's wonderful follow-up book to *My Husband Betty*? Helen's first book was amazing, but I find this second one even more exciting. It is the intimate story of Helen and **Betty** themselves. Helen has a great "voice," very smart, very honest and very clear (*www.myhusbandbetty.com*). Give it to your wife as a present, but read it yourself, too. And don't skip the footnotes. Starstruck Chrissy bought a personally autographed copy for herself and one as a gift for her sister. We were happy to celebrate with Helen and Betty and a hundred friends at the launch party for the book which was held at **Marion's Continental Restaurant** downtown. Marion's is another venue very supportive of queer culture. While we partied upstairs, a group in the downstairs lounge held a discussion on the subject of polyamory, open relationships involving more than two people. Later the polyamorists came up to party with the transgenderists and a good time was had by all.

THE LOVE ART LABORATORY

Whenever my best friend **Annie Sprinkle** (*www.anniesprinkle.org*) comes to town she brings fun with her. This time it was to perform with her wife professor **Elizabeth Stephens** their stage show, *Exposed: Experiments in Love, Sex, Death & Art.* The show, which tells what happens when a former porn star and performance artist falls in love with a feminist academic, ran for three weeks at **Collective: Unconscious**, 279 Church Street, which pre-Rudy Guliani housed the Harmony Burlesque Theatre and where Annie first performed her *Post Porn Modernist* show and I performed in artsty variety shows called "Smut Fests" so it was as if we'd all come home. Dr. Sprinkle has always championed trans culture. A dozen years ago she produced and starred in *"Linda, Les, and Annie, the first Female to Male Transsexual Love Story"* with Les Nichols. At one point in *Exposed* Annie and Beth show their attempts to inseminate Beth and have a baby together. When they think they are pregnant they dance together and say, "Maybe we'll have a girl, maybe we'll have a boy, maybe we'll have a tranny!" One of their "lab assistants was a transman named **Morty** who has a performance of his own called, "Ask A Tranny" in which he dispenses advice like a kid might sell lemonade. The Love Art Laboratory (*www.loveartlab.org*) reflects Annie and Beth's commitment to put more love in the world and the world responded with applause and excellent reviews including a rave from the New York Times. Chrissy was fortunate to be in town for this show too and she not only got to attend but to have dinner later with our guest and dean of photography, the artist **Mariette Pathy Allen** (*mariettepathyallen.com*). To top it off, theater company held a raffle during intermission, Chrissy walked off with the door prize, a swag bag from the Museum of Sex. The girl was a winner all the way around.

When I saw the installation entitled "Chrissy S." I did a double take. It showed a high chair and baby paraphernalia. Was this my brand new student Chrissy Sue? Was she more well-known in the fetish world than she let on. She had, after all, brought those ruffled rubber rumba pants as her only wardrobe? It turned out to be just an amazing coincidence.

THINK KINK

The current exhibit at New York's Museum of Sex (*www.mosex.com*), located at Fifth Avenue and 27th street, is entitled Kink and it is brilliantly curated by **Katherine Gates** who also created the book, *Deviant Desires*. The installation really helps people to understand the bases for lots of unusual predilections, Katherine explores subjects such as foot fetishism, fascinations with giantesses, orgiastic balloon popping, face masking, and demystifies them. She explains their meaning, where they come from, what they satisfy. When I saw the installation entitled "Chrissy S." I did a double take. It showed a high chair and baby paraphernalia. Was this my brand new student Chrissy Sue? Was she more well-known in the fetish world than she let on. She had, after all, brought those ruffled rubber rumba pants as her only wardrobe? It turned out to be just an amazing coincidence. Of course Chrissy was dying to see the exhibit. Because this is an interactive show, there were even some baby clothes for Chrissy to wear and a big diaper for me to hold. As Chrissy would say, a great photo op.

EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY

A few weeks later Mosex held its first Benefit Gala and I was on the Benefit Committee.

LEFT TO RIGHT, Top Row: Helen Boyd, Miss V, Chrissy Sue, Miss Deb, Betty / Norma Gorbo proudly displays her new dvd for Voice Feminization / Gayle and Amy / Annie Sprinkle and Elizabeth Stephens. LEFT TO RIGHT, Bottom Row: Dowager Empress Gefil T'Fish and Emperor Fantosio bid farewell and give thanks for a great year / Veranica Vera and Amanda Lepare.

Students contributed even if they would not be in town to attend. Thank you to Chrissy, Rayla, **Dee** and **Michelle. Dita von Teese** (*www.ditavonteese.com*) was the headline performed. In her famous "Bain d'Exotque" she took a bubblebath on stage. She was astonishing. I sold a ticket to **Michael Salem** whose business of selling crossdressing fantasies and accoutrements has been around since 1969 (*www.michaelsalem.com*). Each time I introduced him to someone he whipped out his card. I know he was dying to meet Ms. Von Teese who until recently was married to Marilyn Manson. "You know I once filled an order for MM which included "prosthetic vaginas," "half-body bras," and "tube top breasts," Michael boasted. Someone who did not need all those accoutrements was trans woman and model **Amanda Lepore**. Ms. Lepore stood out from the crowd in a sexy strap dress that revealed her surgically enhanced body. Her hair was appropriately tied in a cute Barbie pony tail. The evening was a total blast. I finally got to meet **Dr. June Reinisch** former director of the Kinsey Institute and the director of the Muse Foundation, which benefited from the event. My date for the gala had asked me if he should wear a tie with his suit or sports jacket and I said a tie sounded way too regimented. "How about a dog collar?" I told him to go for it. It was just that kind of event.

Amanda Lepore stood out from the crowd in a sexy strap dress that revealed her surgically enhanced body. Her hair was appropriately tied in a cute Barbie pony tail. The evening was a total blast.

ALL WIGGED OUT

When Collective Unconscious held their Gold Star Benefit, Dr. Sprinkle invited me to be her date. Her wife, Professor Stephens was commuting to UC Santa Cruz between their weekend gigs. On a visit to the Academy, Annie had taken one look at a Marie Antoinette wig in cotton candy pink that our dean of do's **Miss Shannon** had created and asked if she might borrow it for the night. Oh, but of course, what are best friends for. I decided to get wigged out too, in my favorite flaming red bob. What fun we had in our party hats. The Gold Star Benefit was a tribute to burlesque, but modern burlesque as performed by some of its best artists. **Nasty Canasta** danced to the sounds of the city-sirens, horns, police whistles, cooing pigeons were her music. And Miss Nasty was a rare bird herself, stripping down to her fans which she fluttered like they were part of her tail. **Miss Dirty Martini** is a big, voluptuous vixen. Her body and the joy she takes and she brings in displaying it, is a reminder that beauty comes in all forms. A gold cape swirled round her plump buttocks and powerful thighs. The cape was one of the many tributes to the night's themes of gold, glitter and dollars. **Johnny Porkpie**, one of the two male strippers did the most unusual act of all. While Dean Martin sang, Johnny pulled bottles out of hidden places in his clothing and guzzled the contents. The finale was a martini shaker he extracted from his boxer shorts. Then he crawled off stage. I doubt he actually consumed alcohol. His act might be deemed politically incorrect, but it was cathartic and hilarious. **Julie Atlas Muz** is always a provocative dancer. A few nights previous at the benefit for the Franklin Furnace art space, Julie had come out on stage dressed in black high heels, wearing a corset of rope in which she was bound, a line of tape across her mouth. Like Houdini she freed herself from her bonds, ripped off her gag and stood proud and naked and free. This time she danced to "Money" and tossed lots of fake bills on the

LEFT TO RIGHT, Top Row: Chrissy Sue finds her femmeself at Miss Vero's / Nun of this and plenty of hot / Julie Atlas Muz, Veronica Vera, Dirty Martini, Annie Sprinkle and Tigger. We love our wigs!
LEFT TO RIGHT, Bottom Row: Chanteuse Topaz: "I'm a drag queen in a woman's body" / Celebrating Helen Boyd's "She's Not The Man I Married" / On stage at Imperial Court.

Look for the woman inside of you, or look to another woman for guidance. Translate that motto for yourself, so no matter how you identify or where you are in the vast gender spectrum, keep yourself surrounded by a network of good supportive friends.

floor. Then she crawled back to retrieve the dough; Johnny Porkpie crawled out after her and they wrestled over the bogus bills until Julie spotted the carcass of a huge water bug that had tried a "walk on" a few minutes before, only to be squished by a lovely female assistant in a bathing suit and heavy boots, thus cutting its career short. All hell broke loose until another performer, a sort of gladiator picked up the dead creature and tucked him in his jock strap. The final performer was **Tigger**, the gold man who danced to Goldfinger. Tigger appeared pretty bare to begin with, wearing a gold lame bathing suit with thong bottom that he'd received as a gift from the ladies. He was an incredible acrobat, with a body as flexible as a yogi. After this wonderful show, Annie and I met the performers, all of whom are totally dedicated to dance. They told us about a convention in Las Vegas called Exotic World (*www.exotic-world.com*) where they would all be performing and invited Annie who spent years on the bumpy burlesque trail to be a judge of the competition. Miss Dirty Martini boasted of her tranny protégé **Rose Wood**, who will compete this year and Miss DM said she would be happy to teach academy girls because for some occasions it is just as important a young lady know how to take her clothes off as well as put them on.

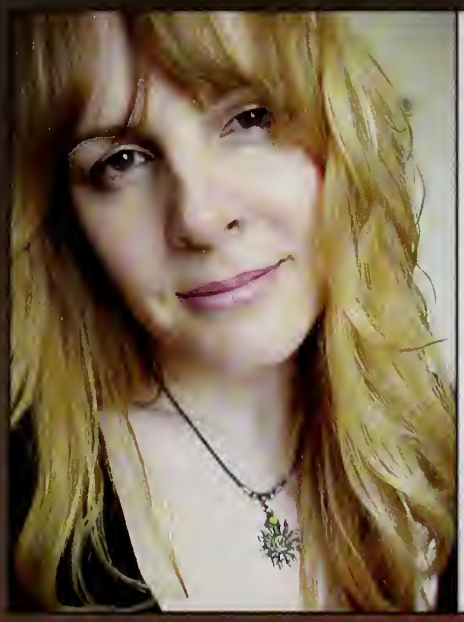
DR. FEELGOOD

Not only is she a pre-eminent voice surgeon and expert in her field; **Dr. Jamie Koufman** is a hostess with the mostest. Each month, from May through October, Jamie holds a barbecue in the candlelit garden beside her Greenwich Village apartment. Her barbecues signal the beginning of summer. Jamie's guests are a great mix of trans community friends, neighborhood artists and visiting friends who come from far and wide. Guests are invited to bring others, thus ensuring a broad and interesting mix. At the May event, **Norma Garbo** dropped by to gift Jamie with her brand new dvd, *The Art of Voice Feminization* by Norma Garbo (*www.normagarbo.com*). Norma's background is a singing teacher as well as a voice teacher and her methods are based in music. Even the rain that night couldn't dampen anyone's spirits and the conversations flowed.

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

I'll sign off with our academy motto which means look for the woman inside of you, or look to another woman for guidance. Translate that motto for yourself, so no matter how you identify or where you are in the vast gender spectrum, keep yourself surrounded by a network of good supportive friends. I hope that you've enjoyed this outing with me. I look forward to taking you on further adventures. In the meantime I invite you to visit me at *www.missvera.com* (212-242-6449).

Veronico Vero is the founder of Miss Vero's Finishing School for Boys Who Wont to Be Girls, NYC ond outhor of the book of the some nome. Website: www.missvera.com.



INTERVIEW WITH ANNAH MOORE

by Larissa Glasser

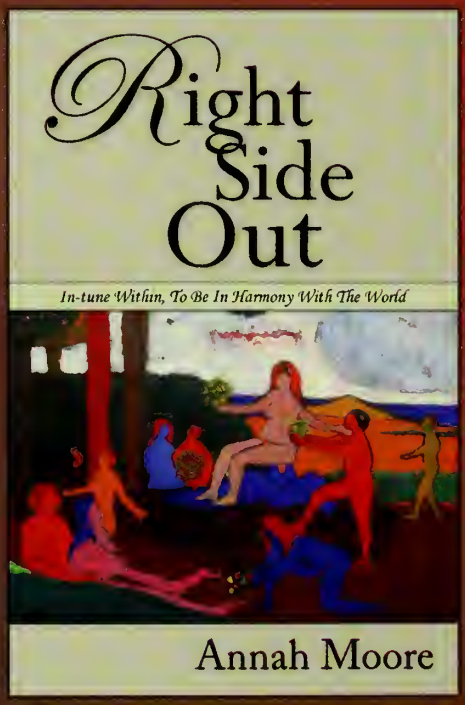
Annah Moore plays lead guitar in the Austin-based heavy metal band **Ignitor**, whose new album "Road of Bones" will be released this year by the Italian record label **Cruz Del Sur**. Blessed with the beauty of Ann Wilson and the savage pyro of The Great Kat, Annah is a source of immense inspiration to other transsexual METALHEADS, myself included.

Originally featured as a subject of the **Discovery Health Channel** documentary *seXchange: Him to Her*, Annah braved the media spotlight for the benefit of outreach and education. Her new memoir, *Right Side Out*, chronicles her struggle to fulfill her body and soul whilst maintaining a relationship with her family. The book tells an amazing story of triumph over despair, and with penetrating insight, confronts some of the biggest challenges transpeople face today and tomorrow.

Annah has been very visible in the media and we at *Tapestry* are just plain psyched to converse with her about the book, music, and what it means to live out loud—confident and at peace with oneself. Her blog can be found at *http://annah.rightsideout.net*.

Transgender Tapestry: Can you tell us about why you wanted to write your book?

Annah Moore: I wanted to do that as a means of giving back to the community, pretty much since I began my own transition. I realized how many other people there were who also needed support. I was super appreciative of the help I'd gotten, so I thought sharing my story was a good way of giving back.



TT: I understand there's also an audio book version in the works.

AM: Yes, I'm also planning a DVD with makeup tips, voice training.

TT: Do you think you'd ever do a book tour, if sales really caught fire?

AM: Yeah, absolutely. The company I published with (iUniverse) supplied me with all sorts of great marketing tools, so I'm getting into that. I sent copies to Oprah and Tyra, a few others, hoping that might spark some attention.

TT: So what first got you into metal?

AM: It was Kiss. In 1979, I saw them on Live at the BBC. I was plopped down on my beanbag and my parents were switching channels around, and we saw this bizarre band on there which turned out to be Kiss. I was just so amazed by Gene Simmons and the show they put on, I just thought "That's so cool, I HAVE to do that." David Bowie was on there later as Ziggy Stardust, and seeing him was really cool because he was so androgynous and I could totally identify with that.

TT: Despite all the macho posturing in heavy metal, there's also tons of androgyny and intersexuality.

AM: Oh yeah, especially in the 80's, but nowadays it seems more macho. But I find it really interesting that there are so many girls in metal bands now, especially bass players, drummers, and singers. For some reason I don't see many guitar players. It's funny, because if I tell somebody I'm in a band, they assume I'm a singer, bassist, or drummer. I let them keep guessing right up to keyboards. People at my work are constantly surprised I'm in a metal band.

TT: Who were some of your biggest influences growing up?

AM: Oh, there were so many in different areas. In music, there was Randy Rhoads (1956-1982). I was also influenced heavily by MAD Magazine and Cartoons Magazine, as far as my drawing goes. My dad's a huge influence on me because he's an artist, and my mom inspired me because she's a teacher who did a lot of writing.

TT: Who are some of your biggest influences today?

AM: One band I really like is Killswitch Engage. The guitar work is just phenomenal, and they're positive without being preachy. I like Opeth because they're cold, dark, sort of neo-Gothic death metal. Megadeth's way up there at the top.

TT: Playing in your band Ignitor must be very empowering for you.

AM: Things are going really well, we had Joe Petagno (of Motörhead fame) do the cover artwork for our upcoming album ["Road of Bones"].

TT: That almost rules TOO much.

AM: (laughs) Yeah, our singer Erika wanted to see if he'd do it, and sure enough he did.

TT: Just goes to show.

AM: Well, you know, sometimes when the price is right....

Photograph by Johnny Medina

From my eorliest memories, I knew something wos funky. When I wos about six yeors old, I would be lying in bed, thinking about myself os I drifted off to sleep, and I would know something wos not quite right. It wosn't thot who I wos as a person wasn't right, it was thot who I was inside wosn't consistent with what I was on the outside. At that time, however, it wos not possible for me to pinpoint the incongruity. I lived my life much like ony other child; I had loving porents, played games with my friends, rode my bicycle up ond down the block, and ployed hockey in the street or boseboll in the empty lot. I must hove seemed normal to others, but there wos always something strange going on behind the scenes that no one else ever saw. To this doy, if I had never soid or done anything about it, and if I hod been able to hide it, no one would have ever known that something was different about me. It was there from the very first memories I have of my life.

TT: So, what would be your dream gig, if you could share a stage with any band in the world?

AM: Share a stage at Madison Square Garden with Kiss and Megadeth. Those two, for sure.

TT: I read on your blog that you had gone skydiving earlier in the year. Do you still do that?

AM: I haven't skydived since I got my bike. After my first tandem jump I got so addicted to that I totally wanted to jump out of the plane on my own. So I decided to take the Skydiver's A license course, and each jump was $200 a shot, but it was great because I got to put my own rig on, and we jumped out of the plane. They held onto me until I pulled my chute, and then I was on my own.

And oh my God, floating in the middle of the sky without a sound at all, was the

The Eagle Cries

If I could halt the raging rains, I would but let them pour
Instead raising my strength with fargiveness to darkened skies
To let it be as it should be and buck it nevermore
As do echoes relinquished by saaring eagle's cries

Tenfald times three and three but more I have dwelt in banished halls
Barne in silence, solace, and waxing glimpses of agany
Ageless seems this fire within my soul sounds of hammer falls
Unto stilled bell within my heart doth ring now prafaundly

Alive the word for which I live in moments each a precious gem
Earned by strength in forgiveness now to my own self I let pour
Value af which can not be drawn nar held within the hand
Let nat life slip through the wretched fingers and drop upan the flaor

If I could halt the raging rains, I would but let them pour
Instead stand tall beside myself arms raised ta flashing skies
To be just as I should be for now and now forever more
Salt and rain mix upan my cheek and through me the eagle cries

most awe-inspiring, amazing experience I have ever had. I definitely want to do it again, but it is expensive, and the weather in Austin can have conditions that make it pretty tough to skydive. But then I got the bike, which has pretty much the same rush I get from diving.

TT: What kind of bike is it?

AM: It's a 2000 Suzuki Bandit 600. It's a good sport bike, very agile and easy to control.

The true "problem" with transsexuality is not the condition itself, it is the method by which non-transsexuals generally handle the subject: often with sensationalism and obfuscation, emotional responses that come with the territory of the uneducated or compassionless.

TT: What made you decide to participate in the Discovery Health Channel special?

AM: There were a few factors. At the time, I was in the band Red Volution, and we were doing pretty well. We were in the midst of recording our first album, and my friend Donna Rose asked me if I wanted to do a 48 Hours special. At first I got excited, but then I found it would be only a 15-minute segment. Plus, they wanted me to change my surgery date to suit their schedule, so I said no.

But then the Discovery Health thing came up and being that they have their own channel, and their focus is really positive and less sensationalistic. Even so, I felt unsure, but then I started thinking about how my desire to become a famous guitar player, musician, and even writer, I figured if later on somebody out there thinks they have all this dirt on me because of my past, of course that would come out.

So I decided I'd be upfront about it from the very get go. That way, not only do I not have to worry about boneheads thinking they have something on me, but I am also honest and upfront about my life, which I think is extremely important. While I would love to just be stealth, half of my life was already spent being somebody else, so I don't want to change one closet for another, you know?

Plus, if I was stealth, then I couldn't really help people on a grand scale. So I began speaking with the show's producer, and she asked me if I would be okay with having my entire band appear in the segment. I was like, "Are you kidding me? That would ROCK!" So then I went to talk with the guys in my band, and none of them knew about me at all. Our drummer couldn't believe it, he asked me what I was coming back with. That was great, they were totally supportive of me one-hundred percent. They got so excited about being on TV, it was so cute.

So then Cindy [former spouse] got involved, which was absolutely the best thing. She is the shining star in that whole show, just amazing.

TT: Do you think the show presented an accurate portrayal of GID?

AM: I do. It's hard to portray or depict the whole thing in one hour, but they did great. I think the show has aired at least nine or ten times so far, which is pretty cool.

TT: What do you think are some of the main obstacles to the public's understanding of transgendered people?

AM: One of the things is the dichotomy of gender, the binary, the black and whiteness some see in gender, no gray or in-between, they see only one or the other. People still assume that, and it's really sad, because thousands of people are born with ambiguous genitalia, so that by itself is proof that things aren't always black and white. I think it's just a matter of time, positive education, and reducing sensationalistic elements in mass media, which is happening slowly, but we are making a lot of progress.

To cope with all of this pressure from the outside, we tend to master the art of repression, subconsciously feeling that to avoid pain, it is better to hide who we really are from the world and ourselves. As we repress our most intrinsic needs and desires, we endeavor to appear as normal as the other people in our social arena. The ironic thing about this whole situation is that most of those other people in our social arena are very likely struggling to fit in with the norm as much as we are, for any number of different reasons.

TT: Do you consider yourself a feminist?

AM: In a moderate way. I'm definitely for women having equal rights. It's also interesting because I think women have a lot more power in some areas than they realize. Being a woman in the metal scene, I've found equal amounts of acceptance and non-acceptance. I've been in Guitar Center before, just looking at the wall of guitars, and the sales guy will

Photograph by Johnny Medina

come up to me and ask, "So, are you looking to buy a guitar for your husband or your boyfriend?" And I was like, "Dude! How dare you say that to me?" And he just turned red, heh. There will be other times where I'll just say, "Yeah, I'd like to plug THAT guitar into THAT amp."

TT: Then you start shredding right there.

AM: (laughs)

TT: That brings me to your endorsement deal with Jackson Guitars. Are you going to design your own model? (*Authors note: Jacksons are the Mercedes Benz of electric guitars, immensely popular among players.)*

AM: Well, I have already, and it took them a pretty long time to get me a quote on it, but it ended up being a bit more expensive than I'd expected, and it's not that much of a custom job, except the standard pearl sharkfin fingerboard inlays would be chrome mirrored metal, but that's the only big difference from a stock Jackson.

TT: Would it be a Randy Rhoads model V?

AM: Yeah, although I do like the Warrior and Kelly models, as well.

TT: Are you using Marshall amps?

AM: Marshall TSL100 head with a standard 4X12 slant cabinet. I'll be getting a flat cab to make a full stack.

TT: What gauge strings do you use?

AM: I use .10's with a heavy bottom. For the last fifteen years I've been using DR's, but then I just got a box of D'Addario's XL strings I really love.

Endure

Cut into the deepest part of me
Release to set myself free
Feel pain—to relieve pain—Endure
Seek pain—to release pain—Endure
Tear away the skin that keeps it all inside
Crawl out of the shell to become alive
Need pain—to relieve pain—Endure
Feed pain—to decrease pain—Endure
The sweet flavor of steel inside
The smell of open flesh
Bodies begin to write
Pain and pleasure mesh
The putrid smell of the City streets
The luscious torture of a million souls
Nothing more than a flock of sheep
In a beautiful, trashed and burned-out world
We must endure—So we can live

TT: How is Austin for metal?

AM: Actually it's pretty slim pickings. We [Ignitor] are about as metal as it gets down here, but there are some hardcore, sort of Pantera-style bands. It's not really a metal scene. But as with just about any city, tribute bands are doing really well. Our other guitar player Stuart is in a Judas Priest tribute band called Sad Wings which is awesome. They do stuff from the early days, too, like "The Ripper" and "Hell Bent for Leather." Their singer is Jason McMasters from the 80's band Dangerous Toys. Our singer Erika is also in an Iron Maiden cover band called Drifter. Both those bands pull in pretty big crowds.

TT: Well, this is pretty great for me, Annah. I seldom get to talk metal shop with other transwomen.

AM: Hey, you know, my pleasure. Metal's a great arena, you know what's really amazing? Since I've been in the metal scene on a more professional level, and more visibile because of the Discovery Health Show and the book and the websites, I have been contacted by so many transwomen who are also metal heads, have been into metal for so long, play guitar, their stories parallel mine.

TT: Really?

AM: Yeah, I must have met like a hundred trans-metalheads in the last couple of years. Amazing. Twenty years ago, I thought I was the only one like this, but then of course, you find out there's a few others, and then you get to "Well, I'm the only one in METAL who's like this," then you come meet more and more folks who have so much in common with you.

Of course, there are a lot of young kids who are dealing with [transgender issues] right now, and I'm sure a lot of them are feeling the same way, they're scared, they think they're alone, it's so important for them to know that you and I and so many other people are here to help them. They're not alone.

IFGE 2007

Philadelphia, PA

2007 Trinity Award Acceptance Keynote

by Alyson Meiselman

photography by Mariette Pathy Allen

Thank you for this honor which I accept with graciousness and humility.

It was not so many years ago, on October 22, 1998, that I, somewhat like Indiana Jones in The Last Crusade, took a leap of faith, and began living full time as a woman, ending one life long struggle and engaging in another.

And, it was not so many years ago, in March 1999, that I drove to the State House in Annapolis, Maryland, and testified before the House of Delegates in support of two bills, one—to provide hate crime protections for, and, one—to prohibit discrimination against, gays and lesbians. I do not consider myself either, but strongly felt the need to speak out.

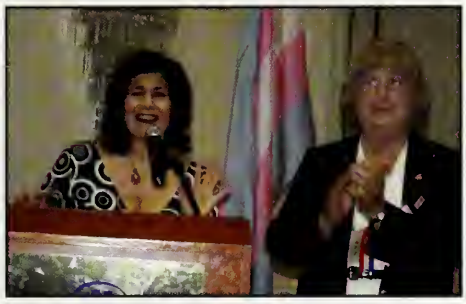
Natalie Hopkinson, a reporter for the Capital News Service, captured the moment and wrote an article which appeared in several weekly papers around the State. The first few sentences said,

"Face scawling and hurling contrary questians, Delegate Emmett C. Burns, D-Baltimore Caunty, shawed little mercy on the witnesses wha testified in suppart of a law pratecting gay and lesbian rights last week, including Gav. Parris N. Glendening.

"Then Alysan Meiselman taak her turn at the House Judiciary Committee witness table. Paised and canfident, her cheeks were dabbed with a little blush and she wore a brawn tweed skirt and pastel green sweater. A flawery neck scarf added a stylish flair. [I still have the autfit!]

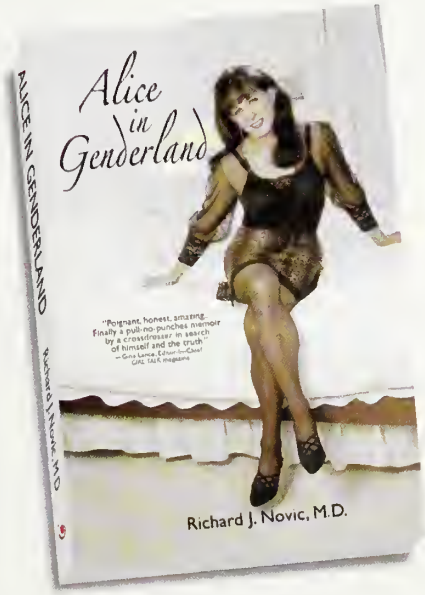
"I am a conservative Jew, a private pilat," Meiselman said. "I am an attarney . . . And, I am a pre-operative male ta female transsexual."

"After Meiselman finished her tale of being kicked out af her son's Bay Scout traop, seeing her client list dwindle ta zera



"The first modern crossdressing memoir... a smart, sexy story you won't be able to put down."

– Lana Reeves, Publisher, *GIRLTALK Online*



Alice in Genderland

Available now at iUniverse.com and Amazon.com
Or call 1-800-288-4677 toll free to order.

and being denied access to restrooms, the legislators were visibly stunned."

Many of those before whom I testified that day I had known since the mid-1960's. They had attended high school with me, been colleagues in the practice of law, and had, just a year before, heard me testify on a bill I had drafted to modify the definition of adultery—to include same-sex liaisons. That was Alan . . . now they faced Alyson. I had, in a very public forum, outed myself. The reaction was palpable. You actually could have heard a pin drop!

The road I chose was not an easy one. In fact, those who really know me know it was, and still is, like engineering an endless 30% grade gravel road and then driving straight up it. (For those who do not understand, for every 100 feet out the rise is 30 feet, a very steep slope.)

It was also in August 1999, that I packed my suitcase and flew to Atlanta, Georgia to attend both an American Bar Association Annual Meeting and a board meeting of the National Lesbian & Gay Law Association. I went to the ABA Annual Meeting to speak on a panel entitled TG-102, NLGLA was a co-sponsor. I spoke out about the bias by bar associations against trans-lawyers. There, at the NLGLA Board meeting, I also met a remarkable trans-attorney from Houston, Texas, who rapidly and nearly immediately became a very close friend.

At that time, as a matter of self-survival, I was determined to succeed through my transition, with both my immediate, and nuclear, families, professionally, and, in securing civil and human rights for transsexuals. We are treated now, in 2007, as Dred Scott was in 1845, our status changes from location to location! We are denied employment opportunities, appropriate health care, housing, and recognition of relationships. More on this topic in a few moments.

Lawyers work in the world of precedents, building legal principles based upon prior decisions, then analyzing and advocating for further appellate decisions refining the law.

My parents had five children, I was the middle one. We were raised to always do one's best, strive to make the world a better place, enjoy and revere nature, assist those less fortunate, and, always "be there." The last meaning to "go" when needed, actively participate, (to not sit on one's hands or merely express verbal support). In other words, "be there" for one's children, siblings, family, friends, community, nation, and world. Protest when necessary and lobby against injustices . . . be part of the solution and not the problem. Keep an open mind, listen before speaking (something many of you know is a trait that I still have not completely mastered), and zealously argue one's position to either convince others to join you or until you are persuaded otherwise.

So, I come from a family that rallied for the release of Soviet Jews; that marches for women's civil and human rights; and, that is actively involved in civic matters. Just as my parents passed these traits on to me, I hope I've passed these traits to my three children.

So you see, speaking out before the Maryland legislature was natural and without any hesitation.

Lawyers work in the world of precedents, building legal principles based upon prior decisions, then analyzing and advocating for further appellate decisions refining the law. If there is no precedent, we engineer how to create one, and then do it. In law school, when I was studying the civil rights cases in Constitutional Law, the examples set by Thurgood Marshall's strategic planning left a lasting impression.

Therefore, it was, is, and should be, no surprise that I began looking for a series of cases, a case to establish the civil and human right to control one's own gender identity, and, a case to begin to overturn prior suppressive legal decisions, in areas like employment and marriage, as have impacted transsexuals negatively.

In the spring of 2000 I was invited into Christie Lee Littleton's efforts before the Texas Supreme Court, and to orchestrate a petition for certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court. The work done in that effort laid a foundation for several subsequent cases. So, the failure to secure review before the U.S. Supreme Court, while difficult to reconcile, was not a loss. (I did not represent Christie Lee at the trial level or in her first appeal.)

In my own state of Maryland, I was still searching for the right plaintiff, when I came across Robert Heilig. The Heilig case was planned. I knew that I had the "right set of facts" to take the case to Maryland's highest Court of Appeals. I knew I would loose initially at the trial level (under a doctrine I call "the doctrine of judicial avoidance"), and in the Court of Special Appeals, and that would be the opening to petition for certiorari to the Court of Appeals. Fortunately, the Court of Special Appeals did an additional favor in completely misunderstanding the law, as had the trial court, as had the trial court's master (who advised the trial court to deny the petition and relief based on a lack of jurisdiction). A state Supreme Court will be highly likely to take a case of first impression if one has a good set of facts. And, when an intermediate appellate court misconstrues the law in a case with broad public impact, the likelihood of a cert petition being granted is exponentially greater. I also suspected a high likelihood of success when the panel of seven judges of the Court of Appeals began the questioning, at oral argument, with "where the line should be drawn," rather than whether or not to draw a line, at all. Just as Thurgood Marshall argued before the same Court his initial cases for racial civil rights, and won, I had successfully argued the first step, in my strategic plan, for gender identity rights.

I mention Thurgood Marshall for two reasons. Several of the early civil rights cases were brought in Maryland, and Marshall had argued them. And, the parallels between civil and human rights regarding racial issues and gender issues are legion and significant.

When the Heilig case was argued in early September 2002, my attorney friend from Houston was at counsel table. I'm sure she would say it was an incredible and unforgettable experience, as I did all the talking (actually presenting the argument to the Court, and fielding the questions raised by the members of the Court), and she was silent (not our usual repartee).

There is a real need to have the best and brightest lawyers identify and find factually appropriate cases to shepherd through the trial courts and on appeal to affect positive appellate case law.

When Heilig was decided on February 11, 2003, a little bit of history was made. The "trans" community had obtained a real win.

The trailhead set by the Heilig decision has not been advanced by lawyers. Instead, several lawyers have tried, as I describe it, to go for the gold ring . . . and, failed. The failure to have a methodical step-by-step strategic plan in the legal community for trans-issues is propagating an ever increasing number of bad precedence setting appellate case law, which is used in subsequent cases to deny relief (think of this as a negative snow ball gaining momentum in the wrong direction). Too many times I have advocated leaving bad trial or intermediate appellate decisions alone, rather than seeking further review on poor or erroneous facts. On such facts, the risk is too high that the result will be another loss.

There is a real need to have the best and brightest lawyers identify and find factually appropriate cases to shepherd through the trial courts and on appeal to affect positive appellate case law. This year, in mid-March several of our best and brightest attorneys met in New York to begin, I hope in earnest, such a process. [Unfortunately, due to other commitments, I was unable to attend.]

There are right and honorable ways to do things, and, wrong and underhanded ways to do things. You can never go wrong with the first . . . the other way ultimately results in failure. When Free State Justice (now Equality Maryland) sold out the Maryland trans-community in 1999 in a misguided effort to get those bills (I spoke of earlier) passed, their strategy (of allowing trans-inclusive language to be deleted in exchange for favorable votes) failed, and so did the legislation. And, when they brought the legislation back in 2000, and again did not stand by the legislation being fully inclusive, I lobbied against passage of what I believed were two intentionally discriminatory bills supported by the lesbian and gay community to the exclusion of the trans-community, and, nearly single handedly caused the defeat of the legislation. My point was made, but only temporarily. In 2001, when the Maryland legislature passed hate crimes legislation and a non-discrimination law . . . (in which Equality Maryland again left the trans-community outside, this time from the initial draft, on purpose) . . . the law, passed and signed, was not inclusive of protections for the transgendered community in the non-discrimination bill. And, it is likely to remain that way for the next 15-20 years. That year I did not lobby at all . . . as too many of my fellow Maryland trans-community members went along with Equality Maryland's claim that they would work hard in the next years to add us. Members of our own community, not knowing any better, accepted the bait of a mirage in the sand, rather than standing up and fighting for their rights. Equality Maryland never carried through, (in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, or 2006) and instead focused on the same-sex marriage issue. In the 2007 legislative session, that just ended, they tried to amend the 2001 non-discrimination law but failed.

My transition was not an easy path to travel; there have been high mountains and harsh desserts. At times I was broke . . . sound familiar? I lost friends, those who rejected me for transitioning, and those who have, sadly, died. However, I kept up the effort, did whatever I needed to do to pay my bills (including working as a welder installing HVAC systems), and kept moving forward, talking to and educating those that would listen, writing monthly columns for Transgender Forum, and, seeking opportunities that would or might impact our rights. There did come a point when I actually closed my law office. But, somehow, like a miracle, a colleague flashed a light at the end of a long tunnel, a glint of renewed life, and, within 30 days of closing my office, I was fortunate to be asked to practice in a small firm in Baltimore, now known as Scurti, Meiselman & Bledsoe, P.A.

Within our broad transgender community there is a significant number of middle, upper middle, and upper class individuals who can economically afford to contribute to our cause for equal rights, for access to employment, health care, health insurance coverage, and so on, but who do not.

Within our broad transgender community there is a significant number of middle, upper middle, and upper class individuals who can economically afford to contribute to our cause for equal rights, for access to employment, health care, health insurance coverage, and so on, but who do not do so. To some extent, actually to a great extent, we all suffer for their failure. I've had many trans-individuals approach me to represent them for free, when they were actually earning more than I—just because they were trans. I nearly went bankrupt in assisting other trans-individuals, who could not truly afford to pay for legal services, and deserved to be represented. Even some lesser well known trans-lawyers have stiffed me for fees they owed for work I did representing them. You all need to make monthly, or annual, contributions to the various legal funds for assisting members of our community. For, if you will not be for you, who will be? If you fail to assist others, who will assist you when you need it? If you allow the rights of others to be diminished, who will stand up for you when your rights are attacked?

In this vein, in 1999, I joined The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, now known as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, and have been on the legal issues committee ever since. I am now the Chair of that committee and have written and filed friend of the court briefs for the organization. The brief filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia, in the De'Lonta case, resulted in establishing rights for transgendered penal institution inmates, statewide – in particular, appropriate medical care, including the prescribing of hormones. Some view HBIGDA or WPATH as gatekeepers, I see this organization's good works as protecting and advocating for those in our community.

Since 2002, I have re-directed some of my energy. I wrote, along with Phyllis Frye and Katrina Rose, a "how to" manual on obtaining a legal change of gender. It was primarily written for use by lawyers. I suspect that some in our community have used this professional tool when they had no lawyer. As Abraham Lincoln said, one who represents himself has a fool for a client. So, for a trans-individual to do so is an extremely high risk endeavor, especially in cases where there is potentially a broad impact.

I've again become active in the American Bar Association, and am the only, and perhaps the first, transsexual in an ABA leadership position. I was present and voting in the House of Delegates in August 2006, when the ABA passed a recommendation supporting non-discrimination based on gender identity. I am a member of the Lawyer's Conference of the Judicial Division, the Family Law Section, and the Section on Individual Rights and Responsibilities. Generating and keeping gender identity issues before these bodies by giving voice and face to our issues I hope has and will benefit our community in the coming years. I know that as a member of the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession I have brought a new perspective to the gender issues discussed in an effort to insure participation in the legal profession of diverse individuals.

In the last six months I again applied for an appointment to the domestic relations master's bench in Montgomery County, Maryland—and, was again called and told that someone else was appointed. It was not a surprise to me, since during the vetting process very few would communicate with me by looking me directly in the eye. Since I do not believe myself to be completely ugly, I can only conclude that the failure, based on studies of body language I have read, is indicative of prejudicial discriminatory behavior. The discrimination by the local bar, of which I spoke of in Atlanta in 1999, remains, even in light of recent ABA Recommendations in August 2006, "to oppose discrimination," and February 2007, "to promote full and equal participation in the legal profession" by adding gender identity to the list of minority attributes. How truly sad for, what is considered, the most liberal county in Maryland.

From now on, while hope springs eternal, I will no longer apply for these positions with the prospect of ever being appointed, but merely to keep track, and repeatedly test, the level of prejudice and bias in the local bar. (In February, I spent $35 to attend a local women's bar "how to get appointed to the bench" program . . . it was, for me, somewhat like going to a comedy club, I enjoyed the ironic comic relief of listening to the advice given, knowing full well that being appointed to the bench appears not in my fate. Still, the contrast between how I am treated is striking, with a lack of acceptance and being shunned, including by the women of the local bar, and, as just one of the girls, who happens to be a transsexual woman, by those on a wider national basis.) Yet, I persevere. Perhaps one day in the future the result will be different for someone coming up behind me, and our community will celebrate the appointment of one of our own to a judicial appointment.

I hope I have given you some insight into my motivations, so perhaps you will "seize the day" yourself.

Before I close, I want to thank my family, most of whom cannot be here. I am still with my spouse of 29+ years, I have a relationship with all three of my children, now all adults, and their spouses or current significant others, and my grandson. I would also be remiss if I did not also acknowledge my parents, now both gone, who instilled in me the spirit and drive to keep pushing forward in all good and worthy endeavors I undertake.

Thank you, again for this prestigious honor.

Where is the Crossdresser?

by Miqqi Alicia Gilbert

IFGE, Philadelphia, April 2007

A week ago, as I write this, I was in Philadelphia, PA having a wonderful and enriching time with my friends, colleagues, sisters and brothers on the T community. While there I attended workshops given by all sorts of people ranging from post-op Ts, to professionals who live (oddly enough) in their birth designated gender. I dined, chatted, shared, and partied with dear friends who are transsexual, crossdressers, transgenderist, or none of the above. In many cases, I was with someone and had no idea of just which category they fell into. They were interesting people with whom I connected.

One of the most wonderful things about our community is its diversity. Within our culture we have many people from all walks of life, all cultures, national heritages, colours, and backgrounds. In each of our sub categories, transsexual, crossdresser, and so on, you will find an enormous social and cultural diversity. It is something that can make us enormously powerful as we form a cross section of Anglo North America's general makeup. We represent everybody.

When I was at the IFGE convention I was honoured by being presented with a Trinity Award for Outstanding Community Service. This wonderful gift made me think about our community, how it sees itself, and how it is composed. In particular, it caused me to reflect on the position of the crossdresser within the larger community. I know that there are many CD activists and volunteers out there who give a great deal of time to their local community. They get involved in the creation of events, the organization of clubs, and other local activities. But, on the national and international scene, we CDs tend to be largely invisible. I think this is a shame.

When I was told about my receiving the Trinity, I was very pleased. I know that the voting for these awards is done by a broad group of people, more than 60, who are at arm's length from the IFGE board. There's no "in group" or buddy system here. All the academy members receive information on all the candidates and vote anonymously. To me this meant that I was chosen by not just those who knew me personally, but also by those who had come across my work and felt I had something to say. I was also told that I had at most ten minutes in which to say a few words about my award. And being, as I am, terrified of Yvonne Cook-Riley, the mistress of ceremonies, I took no more than my allotted time.

What follows below are the remarks I presented in Philadelphia. Following them, many people from all parts of our community told me that my words held meaning for them and resonated with them. I hope they speak to you as well.

Photograph by Mariette Pathy Allen

Miqqi Alicia Gilbert's Trinity Acceptance Speech

I constantly wonder why the enormous resource that is the cross dresser the transgender community is constantly ignored and pushed to the side. I have written about this before in *Transgender Tapestry*, but I see it appearing again and again. There is, for instance, no real contribution by a crossdresser in the wonderful new resource *The Transgender Studies Reader* by Stryker and Whittle. Why? Why are crossdressers frequently left out of committees, not on boards, not used as resources, when there are so many of us, and so many with good, important and secure jobs.

Well, first of all, perhaps there are some reasons. Let's look at some.

1. To begin with the least impressive, CDs are like annoying little sisters. We want to tag along with the big girls and boys, but don't do thing right. We don't wear the right clothes; we put on too much makeup; we're always overdressed; and we aren't good at picking up boys – or, for that matter, girls. So, who wants us following them around?

2. More importantly, we don't have the right values. Our focus is too much on play and having fun; too much on being silly and girly. We like to sing songs with titles like, "Just like a woman" or "I enjoy being a girl," when we don't really seem to know what that means.

3. Also, we hang around in the closet. A crossdresser can live her (or his) whole life without going public. We can be fulfilled by being en femme in restricted circumstances such as the one we are in now, or club meetings, fetish nights, and what have you. Sure, we'd love to go to work in a skirt and pumps, or attend our friend's wedding in a sweet chic cocktail dress, but we can live our lives without fulfilling those fantasies. For a transsexual those things are not fantasies, they are the necessities of life. Not cocktail dresses or pumps, but being a woman who might have to find a nice dress for a fancy affair, or be obligated to wear heels whether she wants to or not.

In the end, it all comes down to politics. Politics is the bottom line. What does that mean? It means that the crossdresser does not have to fight the government; the crossdresser does not have to picket congress or parliament; does not have to mount court battles. The crossdresser can lay low, and go to meetings where she or he has fun. For the cross-dresser being transgendered is not a matter of life and death. So most of us stay in our closets and keep away from the politics and the activism and even the incessant demands for funding, where we could really help without risking exposure.

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We need to build more bridges. We need to realise that there really are many more ways to be transgendered than there are stars in the sky. As crossdressers come to terms with their transgender natures, and accept that we are part of the transgender world, then we can participate more fully and make a stronger commitment.

The problem, however, is not entirely to be laid at the painted toes of the crossdressers. Our full-time transsexual and transgenderist sisters and brothers are not without fault. We are systematically ignored, and not taken seriously. Our intellectual and theoretical interests are not considered, and we are viewed as fetishists and an embarrassment. I, personally, have experienced this treatment more than once, and it hurts. Our big sisters and brothers, if you will, must pay more attention to us. We ought be put on boards, committees, and used as resources. If we are not asked by those running the game, then there is not possibility that we will play. We cannot grow, learn, and become involved members of the community if our interests and values are not considered.

We need to build more bridges. We need to realise that there really are many more ways to be transgendered than there are stars in the sky. As crossdressers come to terms with their transgender natures, and accept that we are part of the transgender world, then we can participate more fully and make a stronger commitment. As full-timers accept us as part of the community and look to us and seek us out for support and help, then we can respond more richly. There needs to be trust.

We all need to be open minded, committed, and all embracing regardless of our personal classification or identity. We need to be willing to take more risks in a world that continually grows more aware of us and our issues. Some of those risks mean that crossdressers need to stand up and be counted, maybe even visibly. Others risks mean that transwomen and transmen need to search out those in the community whose transgender status may not be as emphatic or total as their own. It all comes down to trust and respect. When we trust each other, when we respect each other, then working together becomes a natural result.

Today I am receiving a great award. And what is most important to me about it, is that it comes from my entire community, not just one part of it. For me, receiving this award is a recognition that I am not a voice in the wilderness, but rather that the message I am carrying, the song I am singing resonates with my tribe, means something to my community, speaks to my family – even to my nasty big sisters.

I love you all, and I thank you deeply for this honour. You cannot know how much it means to me.

Blessings to us all.

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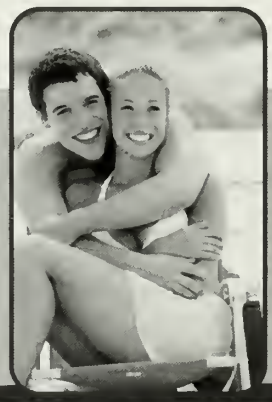

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Learning to See

A Mother's Journey

by Tina Marian

In 1997 at the age of 47, when my arms were no longer long enough to assist me in being able to see up close anymore, I broke down and bought my first set of "cheaters." Since that time, I, like many others my age, depend on these assistive devices to be able to see up close. I hate this fact, and often wish that there would be a way, short of surgery, to be able to see clearly again without these annoying glasses perched on my nose.

Not long ago, I came across an interesting piece of information that basically said that when we start losing vision, it is because we are literally "refusing to see something that is happening right in front of our eyes." I thought back to 1997 to see if in fact there were any issues that I was not seeing clearly.

At the time, I was working full time as a Nurse Manager at a job I loved. I had also gone back to school part time to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing. I was happily married, and had two sons, ages 15 and 12. I had good friends, nice neighbors and family supports. We were all healthy, and although life was busy, things seemed fine. So I later asked myself, what was I missing back then?

I was laid off from my job later in the year, as the hospital was forced to restructure, and the unit that I managed closed. Although sad, this was not the end of the world for me. Nurses can usually find employment, and within a short time, I had secured another nursing position, and had moved on. I eventually graduated with my degree, and returned to a management position that I currently hold today.

The glasses remain a necessary part of my life. Most people would just accept this and move on, but as a psychiatric nurse, I am acutely aware of the body-mind connection, and I strongly believe that many physical problems have emotional drivers, so to speak. So I remained determined to go back to 1997 and solve the mystery as to what I was "not seeing clearly" back when my vision took a downward spiral. This story is about what I now realize, 10 years later, was what I was not seeing with clarity.

My first child Michael came into this world with high energy and a real vigor for living. He had a lively personality and an eagerness to jump right in to life. He excelled in school and sports and relationships. It was hard not to become enraptured by this child, who could impress almost everyone. Parent Teachers conferences became routine, as we would hear the teachers sing Mike's praises, over and over. There was no doubt that this kid would not live up to his full potential. His vision was clear, and as he graduated from a prestigious university, he shot out of the gate with confidence and enthusiasm for taking on the world.

We raised our children the same way. We tried as parents to stress what we saw as important: respect for self and others, importance of God, family, relationships, a good education. I made sure they had a solid religious foundation, took them to church weekly, said grace at the dinner table as we ate as a family each evening. We did things as a family often, and appeared very much the normal intact typical family.

My younger son did not follow in the steps of his older brother. Not only did they look like they were from different families, physical opposites in every way, Dave was also different in personality. Never drawn to sports or rough and tumble activities, he was a sweet child, extremely lovable and funny, a beautiful spirit that tended to be more inward and soft, unlike his brother who was so outward and intense. He was a gentle kid who loved magic and fantasy. I knew enough to understand that every child is different, and I knew this about my two sons as well. I enjoyed their differences. In fact there were times when I joked, "I asked God to give me one of each, but I meant a boy and a girl, I guess He didn't quite get it!" At the time, I just did not realize how very different they were.

In 1997, at the age of 12, Dave began having academic difficulties. This took me by surprise, because he was very bright, and a quick learner, and had thus shown himself to be a good student, so I could not understand why he would be having trouble with things likes reading and math. School started becoming stressful for him, as did getting homework completed. Something was shifting. His easy going spirit seemed troubled at times. He started distancing himself from friends he had previously hung out with, a pattern that continued over the next several years. He started going inward. As mothers, we automatically know when something is "off" with our kids. We may not be able to define it with words; we just have a keen awareness to be on alert. This is our basic maternal human nature.

And thus began the journey to figure out what was going on with Dave. We hired a tutor. We spent money, lots of it, at a specialized learning center that he cried going to. When things did not improve, we did what many parents do, and tried to find out if perhaps there was an underlying learning difficulty. We had him tested for ADD, and when the testing came back in the positive, we started him on medication which seemed to work to decrease the distractibility. And when the grades significantly improved, I was relieved. I thought, "OK, I can handle this. A lot of kids have this, and can be treated both with medication and with learning ways to organize behavior. We're over this hurdle, and now my kid should be happier."

The grades improved, but the going inward went deeper. In high school, Dave was popular, and kids were drawn to him. A handsome boy, and quite talented musically, he did have friends that shared his love of music, but the relationships with these kids seemed superficial at best. He would often turn down their offers to socialize on weekends, and instead choose to stay home, in his room, spending countless hours on the computer. As his peer group hit the usual milestones, and started things like dating, and driving, going

out to movies, normal high school activities, Dave chose to not get involved. He was pursued by several girls through the years, I believe they were not only attracted to his physical self, but perhaps to the mystery that he was; he was not easy to connect with, not easy to read. He did not go to the proms, or to school sporting events.

As his mother, I tried with my very best effort to connect with him on some level, to figure out what was going on. I was worried because his level of engagement on a social level was so lacking and that he seemed so not able to enjoy life like the rest of the kids did. He did just what was required of him, and stayed out of trouble. He assured me repeatedly that he was "just fine." I knew in my gut that he was not, but for the life of me, I could not figure him out.

By the time of his high school graduation, he made straight A's his senior year, and was accepted at a college not far from home. Because of his seemingly indifference toward working towards independence, I had some anxiety as to how he would fare living on his own at college. At that time, he still did not care to drive, and made little effort to take control of simple things like managing a bank account. But off to college he went. He seemed to settle in to college life, at least which is what we were led to believe. On school breaks and vacations, he would return home, and retreat into his isolative life, which consisted of his spending hours on his computer, playing his guitar and getting lost in movie rentals, movies that were comedic in nature or pure fantasy. He'd stay up until the wee hours of the morning, and sleep all day. Friends would stop over and try to engage him in activities, but he remained eager to stay home, alone. He worked at a few menial summer jobs, but it was without much passion and enthusiasm. I'd watch him walk down the street to go to work, and the sadness that he emitted was palpable. Again, I questioned him as to what I was missing, what was he holding onto? He became a master of convincing me that the problem was with me, that I worried too much, and was making something out of nothing. I tried to believe him, but my motherly instinct kept beating the drum of concern.

As his senior year approached, and he was not working toward putting together a solid plan for after graduation, like graduate school or job, I again wondered if my 21 year old son was going to be dependent on us forever. I took a lot of criticism from my family as to how I should not drive out to bring him home on school breaks, but instead let him find his own way home. My family tended to say that his lack of independence was something that I fostered, and perhaps on some level they are right. But it's a mother's motherly instinct to want to protect and defend the child who lacks something, the one who has the tougher time in life, be it a confidence or self esteem issue, learning or physical challenge, it does not matter. We want our kids to succeed and we will go out of our way to make it happen.

One morning, after he returned to school last September, I woke up with that all too familiar and all too uncomfortable lump of anxiety in my gut as my thoughts turned to David. The past 10 years seemed to be connected by a constant thread of hoping that whatever he was going through in his own

head would turn out to be just a stage that he would resolve and grow out of. Since I and my husband had loved both of our children all through the years, wasn't that enough? If you love your kids and teach them well, shouldn't that ensure a positive outcome? I got out of bed and made a conscious decision to share this burden with someone else.

I often counsel my patients that when they are in a situation where they feel they have no control to actually write a letter to God, pour out the problem, and then ask God to take over. The letter is signed and sealed, and put in what I call "The God Box." So I followed my own advice. After pouring my heart out to God, I reminded Him that Dave was very much His child. And since I was at my wits end, I was delegating this to God. "He's your son too," I wrote. "You love him like you love all of us, so please take over, because I don't know what else to do, and I trust that you will do just that, because you are God." As I placed the letter in the box, I "let go," and decided to trust. When I re-read that letter now, I get goose bumps.

I found myself less preoccupied, trusting that God would somehow step up to the plate. I stopped trying to control what I could not control. I started feeling lighter, and actually felt hopeful that my son was going to have a great life, he just was a late bloomer. One night last fall, right before Halloween, I had an uncanny urge to look clearly at Dave's bank account on line, as our accounts are linked. I never paid much attention to his account, because he spent very little, and his money would last most of the school year. But I noticed that his balance was going down faster than usual, so I drew in a deep breath and looked closely, again with that old anxiety wrapped around my heart. What was I afraid I'd see?

What I saw was several online purchases to pharmacies out of the country. That was it!! Now I knew!! He had a drug problem, and that explained it. I was determined to get to the bottom of this for once and for all. I dialed his cell phone, and he answered it, which was unusual, as I typically would have to leave a message. I demanded to know what he was buying online. I wanted the truth, no more deception; I needed to know what was going on. I took a deep breath and waited for his reply.

"Hormones, Mom, I'm buying hormones." For a brief second I pictured his purchasing some type of steroid or muscle building product that enhance athletic performance, and felt a relief. That was it, he was going to the gym, and pumping iron. Kind of expensive, but OK, great! I attempted to verify this with him, and his reply was something that rocked my world. "No mom, it's not that. I am a transsexual."

I tried not to faint, held on to the wall, took slow and deep breaths, and attempted to ask clear and cohesive questions, like "What does that mean? I don't understand. Are you sure? Perhaps you are just confused, or it's some silly college idea." But as I listened carefully to his answers, I knew in my heart of hearts, that we were all embarking on a strange and difficult and life altering journey that would not be easy for any of us. My son was totally of the conviction that he had the

brain of a woman. He had started the transition hormonally several months before. My husband was out of town on business, so there I sat all alone as our phone call ended, now having to face the truth in front of me. It would be days before I gradually was able to come out of the emotional shock I went into that night.

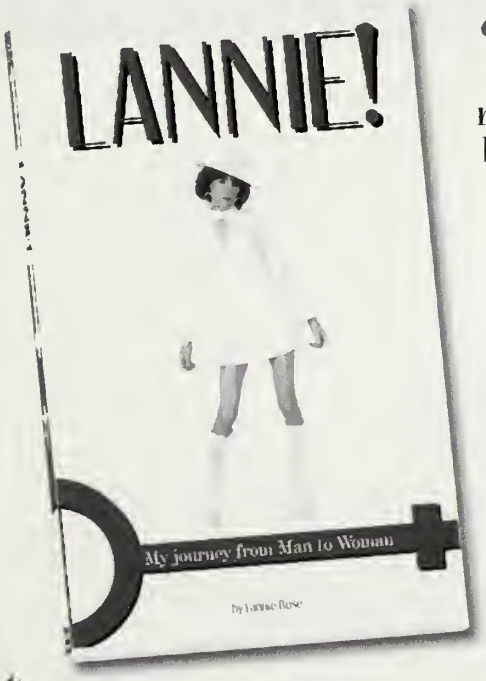
As a nurse, I had encountered a few transgender people in my care, but I must admit, despite being a nurse, I really did not know what it meant. I felt mildly curious about them, and wondered why would anyone ever want to do that to themselves? Beyond that, there was no reason for me to explore the issue. Why would I? These people did not affect me, and were not part of my life, so it never seemed important to learn.

Well, now this was affecting me and my family, big time. This was our kid who was telling us that from about age 12, when puberty hit and the testosterone started flowing, he knew that a big error had been made. The testosterone contributed to a dysphoria, or unhappiness, and for the next five years as his body started becoming more masculine he would struggle to try to identify what the problem was. The onset of puberty was when the sullen behavior started, the preoccupation, the distractibility, the retreat into his own world of trying to figure out what made him feel so different from everyone else. In retrospect, it explained so much. The big clothes he wore, a way of covering his body up, the constant preoccupation with hair styles, the nail polish and necklace, which I did not attribute to anything, because many musicians did that sort of thing. The sad soulful music that I would hear coming out of his room as he played his guitar, which always tore at my heart, the avoidance of dating and proms and social activities that are normal for other kids at that age.

It also explained why as an adolescent he would often get almost obsessive about his desire for something that he thought would make him happy. He would ask incessantly for the new bike, or the new skateboard, or a dog, anticipating that perhaps the joy of the new object would hopefully be enough to cover up the underlying hideous feelings that only got worse as time went on. It breaks my heart when I think of the dark and lonely nights that he spent wondering and worrying how to deal with it all. It never diminished, it never resolved. How alienating it must be to feel so radically different. It explained his taking college courses in neuroscience, endocrinology, philosophy, and psychology. He was trying to figure it all out. For nearly 10 years, Dave traveled down this emotionally painful journey all alone. And I, the mother could not see!

I went through a myriad of emotions, including shock, sadness, guilt, loss, confusion, anxiety, fear, just about all of them I guess. I decided to educate myself about the subject, and dove into all the books I could find. I looked up who the experts were, and sought out their help. I was fortunate to find several gender specialists in my area and got us involved. I got proper medical supervision for him so that we could do this "above board." I prayed to God for strength, and then when I was able, I starting telling friends and coworkers, only a little at a time, as my comfort level would permit, and would be fortified every time I could say the words "my son is really my daughter" and the world would not end. I found an on line support group for parents of transgender kids, and found a tremendous amount of support and advice there. I was amazed that there were literally hundreds of moms and dads riding the exact same emotional rollercoaster as we were. Most importantly, I vowed that I would be there for HER as a loving and supportive parent, leading my family with an attitude of acceptance.

In my reading I learned that no one decides or chooses to become a transsexual.



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LANNIE!

MY JOURNEY FROM MAN TO WOMAN

Lannie Rose, author of *How To Change Your Sex: A Lighthearted Look at the Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do*, now tells the story of her own gender transition. This is just the good stuff—the five years Lannie actually spent changing her sex and launching her new life as a woman. The trip is fascinating, touching, and often funny as Lannie struggles to overcome her male body and upbringing to become the woman she believes she always should have been.

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Think about it, why in God's name would anyone ever choose to do something as unusual or as difficult as change their gender? No, this is actually a biological condition that these kids are born with. Despite attempts to forge ahead and try to be the gender your body says it is, like join the military to be more "masculine" or marry and have babies to be more "feminine" there are countless transsexuals whose stories all say the same. That the body and the brain just don't line up, despite attempts to will it away. A transsexual has but one of three pitiful options: to painfully go through life pretending to be someone they are not, or to end the torture by ending their life, or choosing to transition over to make things match. Given these choices, which would you want for your own child, or for yourself?

The interesting thing is that now that she has decided to finally come out with the truth, my daughter seems happier, like a huge burden has been lifted from her shoulders. Yes, it is difficult to start referring to your son as your daughter, and using different pronouns. But, after several months into it, it finally dawned on me when I realized that I don't have a son who wants to be a daughter. I have a daughter who is trapped in the body of a boy, and needs help in getting out and over. Her father and brother struggle with this, but overall remain loving and supportive, doing the best they can in their own way.

Sadly, in many cases, transsexuals are dismissed totally from their family systems, judged by them to be too much of a perverse oddity to be supported. These are the trans folk who are driven to the streets in a cold cruel world that at this juncture remains largely ignorant and thus fearful of this population. Horror story after horror story abound as trans folk try and integrate into society, in pursuit of basic needs for survival, like gainful employment or a place to live. Most disenfranchised minority populations have experienced severe and debilitating discrimination and at worse, vengeance, but many groups have successfully fought for and gained legal rights to protect them. Anti-discrimination laws are now on the books, and that means people cannot be excluded from jobs or housing based on race, sex, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Unfortunately, these equal protection laws do not apply to transgender people, except in a handful of states and some individual counties and municipalities. As my daughter seeks to find a summer job, she is beginning to face the harshness of the world, as she gets turned down repeatedly, job after job. She is educated, smart, and sweet and kind, yet no one is rushing to embrace her strengths or appreciate her talents, or to just give a kid a chance.

What most people are not aware of is the hundreds of transgender people who live amongst us who successfully transitioned at a young age, and are living "in stealth." In other words, they had the means and support in many cases to get to the other side, and integrate into society. Sometimes they move to a new area, and start a whole new life, often times successfully, integrating a multitude of professions. The transgender person you see on Jerry

Springer is the exception, and unfortunately this kind of tabloid style exposure tends to create an unwarranted negative false perception of what a transsexual is. Recently, a daily soap opera featured a character that was transitioning from male to female. The show did this with dignity and served to educate its viewers. In April, MSNBC did a documentary about transsexual college age kids. It too was done well, and served to bring this mystifying issue to light. And Barbara Walters did a wonderful show on 20/20 dedicated to the personal stories of three transgender kids and their supportive families. *Newsweek* had a featured cover story on Gender Identity. This is a refreshing sign that perhaps the time has finally come to remove the cloak of secrecy and shame for this population of people who just want their Constitutional right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

For far too long, society has ignorantly pigeon holed people into a rigid binary "male-female" system with no room for variance. I truly believe that there is a growing momentum, a sea change if you will, that has recently begun, that will serve to expand our awareness and lead to a day in the future when society includes and appreciates all gender types. Perhaps the image of a "gender spectrum" will become clearer, with the feminine female on one end and the masculine male on the other end, and everyone else falling out somewhere along that spectrum. Bigender and intersexed individuals falling out in the middle range. Like flowers, we humans come in an assortment of varieties, each with unique and individual talents, skills and qualities. A science continues to study the gender issue, I believe we will be able to break out of our current and limited social construct which only serves to separate and exclude.

Right now picturing that day in the future seems so far off from where we are at. People fear what they don't understand, so as a mother, I will do my part to pave the way to a better world for my daughter and all of the others who share her condition. This means talking openly with others, and not trying to hide our kid. For if I deal with this with an attitude of shame or embarrassment, I remain part of, and therefore perpetuate the problem. It means becoming politically active in trying to push through legislation here in my own state, where there is an actual bill that will be voted on in the near future that seeks to end gender base discrimination. It means trying to find speaking venues where education can take place, perhaps in school systems. Of course there are days still when I wake up and tell myself that I am not strong enough to take on this battle, but then I think, "If it's hard for me, how difficult must it have been and still is for them?" I think of her and her future, and then I find the courage.

It could have been radically different for our child. Perhaps she could have been born into a family that would be unsupportive, unloving. She could have gone down a different road when deciding upon which of those three lousy options that she had to choose from. People I have met and told our story to all say one thing, "Thank God you are the mother." That always strikes me as odd, because I cannot imagine any mother who would disown or reject her own child for any reason. So I am just doing what I vowed to do as both of my kids were put in my physical charge: love them unconditionally. My daughter knows she can count on her mother to shed light on the truth, educate others and work to make the world a better place, one person at a time. I see this now very clearly.

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S 1105

Much of our community's passionate discussion centers around two main pieces of federal legislation; Hate Crimes (LLEEA) and Employment Non-Discrimination (ENDA). Although countless hours have been spent arguing over whether the big money LGBt organizations such as HRC want us in the bill, and whether the wording covers crossdressers and/or transsexuals, very few people have ever seen these elusive behemoths. As Mark Twain was said to have said, "Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please." So, to fulfill his requirement, IFGE has published the complete text of these hotly debated bills.

There are actually two versions of every bill, including these: One version to be introduced in the Senate, and a corresponding bill to be introduced in the the House of Representatives. The bills are not always identical, especially since they may be amended as part of the compromise process in getting them passed. If they pass both the House and the Senate, any differences must then be eliminated in "committee". Radical surgery is often performed on legislation to get it out of this committee, and that is where trans-inclusive language is always in danger of being excised, if it manages to get included in the first place.

The first major bill being considered is the "Mathew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007" (S 1105). This is the latest version of a bill that has been bouncing around Congress for a few years, but this version actually has trans-inclusive (mostly) language. On May 3rd of 2007 the House of Representative passed their version of the bill (HR1592) by a vote of 237-180. In the Senate it was attached to the "National Defense Authorization Act" on July 11th of 2007, but the larger bill was soon withdrawn until at least September. Perhaps for the first time, this bill has a real chance of being passed, but the current Resident has threatened to veto it in any case. Since the House's version is largely identical to the Senate's, we have included only the pending Senate version.

One of the controversies surrounding this bill is that it does not actually say "gender expression" it lists only "gender identity". Many activists think this is sufficient, but others say that it would only protect transsexuals, not crossdressers or gender variant people (discuss). Many others question the constitutionality of the bill, although it is largely an update of the 1964 "Title VII" which has held up for over forty years.

Photograph by Denise Leclair

Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 (Introduced in Senate)

S 1105 IS

110th CONGRESS

1st Session

S. 1105

To provide Federal assistance to States, local jurisdictions, and
Indian tribes to prosecute hate crimes, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

April 12, 2007

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. SMITH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. DODD, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BAYH, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. OBAMA, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. JOHNSON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide Federal assistance to States, local jurisdictions, and Indian tribes to prosecute hate crimes, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Matthew Shepard Local Law enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007.'

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The incidence of violence motivated by the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim poses a serious national problem.

(2) Such violence disrupts the tranquility and safety of communities and is deeply divisive.

(3) State and local authorities are now and will continue to be responsible for prosecuting the overwhelming majority of violent crimes in the United States, including violent crimes motivated by bias. These authorities can carry out their responsibilities more effectively with greater Federal assistance.

(4) Existing Federal law is inadequate to address this problem.

(5) A prominent characteristic of a violent crime motivated by bias is that it devastates not just the actual victim and the family and friends of the victim, but frequently savages the community sharing the traits that caused the victim to be selected.

(6) Such violence substantially affects interstate commerce in many ways, including the following:

(A) The movement of members of targeted groups is impeded,
and members of such groups are forced to move across State
lines to escape the incidence or risk of such violence.

(B) Members of targeted groups are prevented from purchasing
goods and services, obtaining or sustaining employment, or
participating in other commercial activity.

(C) Perpetrators cross State lines to commit such violence.

(D) Channels, facilities, and instrumentalities of interstate
commerce are used to facilitate the commission of such violence.

(E) Such violence is committed using articles that have traveled in interstate commerce.

(7) For generations, the institutions of slavery and involuntary servitude were defined by the race, color, and ancestry of those held in bondage. Slavery and involuntary servitude were enforced, both prior to and after the adoption of the 13th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, through widespread public and private violence directed at persons because of their race, color, or ancestry, or perceived race, color, or ancestry. Accordingly, eliminating racially motivated violence is an important means of eliminating, to the extent possible, the badges, incidents, and relics of slavery and involuntary servitude.

(8) Both at the time when the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution of the United States were adopted, and continuing to date, members of certain religious and national origin groups were and are perceived to be distinct 'races.' Thus, in order to eliminate, to the extent possible, the badges, incidents, and relics of slavery, it is necessary to prohibit assaults on the basis of real or perceived religions or national origins, at least to the extent such religions or national origins were regarded as races at the time of the adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

(9) Federal jurisdiction over certain violent crimes motivated by bias enables Federal, State, and local authorities to work together as partners in the investigation and prosecution of such crimes.

(10) The problem of crimes motivated by bias is sufficiently serious, widespread, and interstate in nature as to warrant Federal assistance to States, local jurisdictions, and Indian tribes.

SEC. 3. DEFINITION OF HATE CRIME.

In this Act--

(1) the term 'crime of violence' has the meaning given that term in section 16, title 18, United States Code;

(2) the term 'hate crime' has the meaning given such term in section 280003(a) of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (28 U.S.C. 994 note); and

(3) the term 'local' means a county, city, town, township, parish, village, or other general purpose political subdivision of a State.

SEC. 4. SUPPORT FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS BY STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.

(a) Assistance Other Than Financial Assistance-

(1) IN GENERAL- At the request of State, local, or Tribal law enforcement agency, the Attorney General may provide technical, forensic, prosecutorial, or any other form of assistance in the criminal investigation or prosecution of any crime that--

(A) constitutes a crime of violence;
(B) constitutes a felony under the State, local, or Tribal laws; and
(C) is motivated by prejudice based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim, or is a violation of the State, local, or Tribal hate crime laws.

(2) PRIORITY- In providing assistance under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall give priority to crimes committed by offenders who have committed crimes in more than one State and to rural jurisdictions that have difficulty covering the extraordinary expenses relating to the investigation or prosecution of the crime.

(b) Grants-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Attorney General may award grants to State, local, and Indian law enforcement agencies for extraordinary expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes.

(2) OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS- In implementing the grant program under this subsection, the Office of Justice Programs shall work closely with grantees to ensure that the concerns and needs of all affected parties, including community groups and schools, colleges, and universities, are addressed through the local infrastructure developed under the grants.

(3) APPLICATION-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each State, local, and Indian law enforcement agency that desires a grant under this subsection shall submit an application to the Attorney General at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by or containing such information as the Attorney General shall reasonably require.

(B) DATE FOR SUBMISSION- Applications submitted pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall be submitted during the 60-day period beginning on a date that the Attorney General shall prescribe.

(C) REQUIREMENTS- A State, local, and Indian law enforcement agency applying for a grant under this subsection shall--

(i) describe the extraordinary purposes for which the grant is needed;

(ii) certify that the State, local government, or Indian tribe lacks the resources necessary to investigate or prosecute the hate crime;

(iii) demonstrate that, in developing a plan to implement the grant, the State, local, and Indian law enforcement agency has consulted and coordinated with nonprofit, nongovernmental victim services programs that have experience in providing services to victims of hate crimes; and

(iv) certify that any Federal funds received under this subsection will be used to supplement, not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for activities funded under this subsection.

(4) DEADLINE- An application for a grant under this subsection shall be approved or denied by the Attorney General not later than 30 business days after the date on which the Attorney General receives the application.

(5) GRANT AMOUNT- A grant under this subsection shall not exceed $100,000 for any single jurisdiction in any 1-year period.

(6) REPORT- Not later than December 31, 2008, the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report describing the applications submitted for grants under this subsection, the award of such grants, and the purposes for which the grant amounts were expended.

(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS- There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) Authority to Award Grants- The Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice may award grants, in accordance with such regulations as the Attorney General may prescribe, to State, local, or Tribal programs designed to combat hate crimes committed by juveniles, including programs to train local law enforcement officers in identifying, investigating, prosecuting, and preventing hate crimes.

(b) Authorization of Appropriations- There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION FOR ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL TO ASSIST STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Justice, including the Community Relations Service, for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 such sums as are necessary to increase the number of personnel to prevent and respond to alleged violations of section 249 of title 18, United States Code, as added by section 7 of this Act.

SEC. 7. PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN HATE CRIME ACTS.

(a) In General- Chapter 13 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

'Sec. 249. Hote crime octs

'(o) In Generol-

'(1) OFFENSES INVOLVING ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN- Whoever, whether or not octing under color of low, willfully couses bodily injury to ony person or, through the use of fire, o fireorm, or on explosive or

incendiary device, attempts ta cause badily injury ta any persan, because af the actual ar perceived race, calar, religian, ar natianal arigin af any persan--

'(A) shall be imprisaned nat mare than 10 years, fined in accardance with this title, ar bath; and

'(B) shall be imprisaned far any term af years ar far life, fined in accardance with this title, ar bath, if--

'(i) death results fram the affense; ar

'(ii) the affense includes kidnaping ar an attempt ta kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse ar an attempt ta cammit aggravated sexual abuse, ar an attempt ta kill.

'(2) OFFENSES INVOLVING ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, OR DISABILITY-

'(A) IN GENERAL- Whaever, whether ar nat acting under calar af law, in any circumstance described in subparagraph (B), willfully causes badily injury ta any persan ar, thraugh the use af fire, a firearm, ar an explasive ar incendiary device, attempts ta cause badily injury ta any persan, because af the actual ar perceived religian, natianal arigin, gender, sexual arientatian, gender identity ar disability af any persan--

'(i) shall be imprisaned nat mare than 10 years, fined in accardance with this title, ar bath; and

'(ii) shall be imprisaned far any term af years ar far life, fined in accardance with this title, ar bath, if--

'(I) death results fram the affense; ar

'(II) the affense includes kidnaping ar an attempt ta kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse ar an attempt ta cammit aggravated sexual abuse, ar an attempt ta kill.

'(B) CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED- Far purpases af subparagraph (A), the circumstances described in this subparagraph are that--

'(i) the canduct described in subparagraph (A) accurs during the caurse af, ar as the result af, the travel af the defendant ar the victim--

'(I) acrass a State line ar natianal barder; ar

'(II) using a channel, facility, ar instrumentality af interstate ar fareign cammerce;

'(ii) the defendant uses a channel, facility, ar instrumentality af interstate ar fareign cammerce in cannectian with the canduct described in subparagraph (A);

'(iii) in cannectian with the canduct described in subparagraph (A), the defendant emplays a firearm, explasive ar incendiary device, ar ather weapan that has traveled in interstate ar fareign cammerce; ar

'(iv) the canduct described in subparagraph (A)--

'(I) interferes with cammercial ar ather ecanamic activity in which the victim is engaged at the time af the canduct; ar

'(II) atherwise affects interstate ar fareign cammerce.

'(b) Certificatian Requirement- Na prasecutian af any affense described in this subsectian may be undertaken by the United States, except under the certificatian in writing af the Attarney General, the Deputy Attarney General, the Assaciate Attarney General, ar any Assistant Attarney General specially designated by the Attarney General that--

'(1) such certifying individual has reasanable cause ta believe that the actual ar perceived race, calar, religian, natianal arigin, gender, sexual arientatian, gender identity, ar disability af any persan was a mativating factar underlying the alleged canduct af the defendant; and

'(2) such certifying individual has cansulted with State ar lacal law enfarcement afficials regarding the prasecutian and determined that--

'(A) the State daes nat have jurisdictian ar daes nat intend ta exercise jurisdictian;

'(B) the State has requested that the Federal Gavernment assume jurisdictian;

'(C) the State daes nat abject ta the Federal Gavernment assuming jurisdictian; ar

'(D) the verdict ar sentence abtained pursuant ta State charges left demanstratively unvindicated the Federal interest in eradicating bias-mativated vialence.

'(c) Definitians- In this sectian--

'(1) the term 'explasive ar incendiary device' has the meaning given such term in sectian 232 af this title;

'(2) the term 'firearm' has the meaning given such term in sectian 921(a) af this title; and

'(3) the term 'gender identity' far the purpases af this chapter means actual ar perceived gender-related characteristics.

'(d) Rule af Evidence- In a prasecutian far an affense under this sectian, evidence af expressian ar assaciatians af the defendant may nat be intraduced as substantive evidence at trial, unless the evidence specifically relates ta that affense. Hawever, nathing in this sectian affects the rules af evidence gaverning impeachment af a witness..'

(b) Technical and Canfarming Amendment- The analysis far chapter 13 af title 18, United States Cade, is amended by adding at the end the fallawing:

'249. Hate crime acts..'

SEC. 8. STATISTICS.

(a) In General- Subsection (b)(1) of the first section of the Hate Crime Statistics Act (28 U.S.C. 534 note) is amended by inserting 'gender and gender identity,' after 'race,.'

(b) Data- Subsection (b)(5) of the first section of the Hate Crime Statistics Act (28 U.S.C. 534 note) is amended by inserting, 'including data about crimes committed by, and crimes directed against, juveniles' after 'data acquired under this section.'

SEC. 9. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, an amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act, the amendments made by this Act, and the application of the provisions of such to any person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.

HR 2015

The "**Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007**" (HR 2105) is the second major bill pending. Originally introduced under a different title in 1974, ENDA has been dead in the water for many years now. Opponents of transgender inclusion say that we hurt their chances of getting it passed, but 33 years is hardly the fast track. The current, trans-inclusive (mostly) version is expected to be on the floor of the House in September. Some observers doubt the Senate will even introduce the legislation this year, but others feel that if it passes in the House then the Senate would give it a higher priority. We have included the House version below, since the Senate version has not been introduced. The wording of the Senate version will not be finalized until introduction, and there is even some buzz on the hill that the trans-inclusive language could be dropped (completely).

Photograph by Denise Lecloir

HR 2015

110th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 2015

To prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 24, 2007

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts (for himself, Ms. PRYCE of Ohio, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. WYNN, Mr. CLAY, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. HONDA, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. PASTOR, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. FARR, Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. DINGELL, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. WU, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. HINCHEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. HOLT, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. FILNER, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. NADLER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. OLVER, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SIRES, Mr. ELLISON, and Mrs. DAVIS of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committees on House Administration, Oversight and Government Reform, and Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

A BILL

To prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

— Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

— This Act may be cited as the **Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007.**

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to provide a comprehensive Federal prohibition of employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity;

(2) to provide meaningful and effective remedies for employment discrimination on

the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity; and

(3) to invoke congressional powers, including the powers to enforce the 14th amendment to the Constitution, and to regulate interstate commerce and provide for the general welfare pursuant to section 8 of article I of the Constitution, in order to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

(a) In General: In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION: The term 'Commission' means the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

(2) COVERED ENTITY: The term 'covered entity' means an employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee.

(3) EMPLOYEE:

(A) IN GENERAL: the term 'employee' means--

(i) an employee as defined in section 701(f) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(f);

(ii) a Presidential appointee or State employee to which section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e:16(a)(1) applies;

(iii) a covered employee, as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301) or section 411(c) of title 3, United States Code; or

(iv) an employee or applicant to which section 717(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e:16(a)) applies.

(B) EXCEPTION: The provisions of this Act that apply to an employee or individual shall not apply to a volunteer who receives no compensation.

(4) EMPLOYER: The term 'employer' means--

(A) a person engaged in an industry affecting commerce (as defined in section (701)(h) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(h)) who has 15 or more employees (as defined insubparagraphs (A)(i) and (B) of paragraph (3)) for each working day in each of 20 or more calendar weeks in the current or preceding calendar year, and any agent of such a person, but does not include a bona fide private membership club (other than a labor organization) that is exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(B) an employing authority to whichsection 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 applies;

(C) an employing office, as defined insection 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 or section 411(c) of title 3, United States Code, or; and

(D) an entity to which section 717(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 applies.

(5) EMPLOYMENT AGENCY: The term 'employment agency' has the meaning given the term in section 701(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(c))

(6) GENDER IDENTITY: The term 'gender identity' means the gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of an individual, with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.

(7) LABOR ORGANIZATION: The term 'labor organization' has the meaning given the term in section 701(d) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(d)).

(8) PERSON: The term 'person' has the meaning given the term in section 701(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(a)).

(9) SEXUAL ORIENTATION: The term 'sexual orientation' means homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality.

(10) STATE: The term 'State' has the meaning given the term in section 701(i) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e(i)).

(b) Application of Definitions: For purposes of this section, a reference in section 701 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964--

(1) to an employee or an employer shall be considered to refer to an employee (as defined in paragraph (3)) or an employer (as defined in paragraph (4)), respectively, except as provided in paragraph (2) below; and

(2) to an employer in subsection (f) of that section shall be considered to refer to an employer (as defined in paragraph (4)(A)).

SEC. 4. EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED.

(a) Employer Practices: It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer--

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment of the individual, because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify the employees or applicants for employment of the employer in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment or otherwise adversely affect the status of the individual as an employee, because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

(b) Employment Agency Practices: It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of the individual or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of the individual.

(c) Labor Organization Practices: It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a labor organization--

(1) to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of the individual;

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify its membership or applicants for membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment, or would limit such employ-

ment or otherwise adversely affect the status of the individual as an employee or as an applicant for employment because of such individual's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; or

(3) to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

(d) Training Programs: It shall be an unlawful employment practice for any employer, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee controlling apprenticeship or other training or retraining, including on-the-job training programs, to discriminate against any individual because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of the individual in admission to, or employment in, any program established to provide apprenticeship or other training.

(e) Association: An unlawful employment practice described in any of subsections (a) through (d) shall be considered to include an action described in that subsection, taken against an individual based on the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of a person with whom the individual associates or has associated.

(f) No Preferential Treatment or Quotas: Nothing in this Act shall be construed or interpreted to require or permit--

(1) any covered entity to grant preferential treatment to any individual or to any group because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of such individual or group on account of an imbalance which may existwith respect to the total number or percentage of persons of any actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity employed by any employer, referred or classified for employment by any employment agency or labor organization, admitted to membership or classified by any labor organization, or admitted to, or employed in, any apprenticeship or other training program, in comparison with the total number or percentage of persons of such actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in any community, State, section, or other area, or in the available work force in any community, State, section, or other area; or

(2) the adoption or implementation by a covered entity of a quota on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

(g) Disparate Impact: Only disparate treatment claims may be brought under this Act.

SEC. 5. RETALIATION PROHIBITED.

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a covered entity to discriminate against an individual because such individual (1) opposed any practice made an unlawful employment practice by this Act; (2) opposed any practice that the individual reasonably believed is an unlawful employment practice under this Act; or (3) made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under this Act.

SEC. 6. EXEMPTION FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

(a) In General: This Act shall not apply to any of the employment practices of a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society which has as its primary purpose religious ritual or worship or the teaching or spreading of religious doctrine or belief.

(b) Certain Employees: For any religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society that is not wholly exempt under subsection (a), this Act shall not apply with respect to the employment of individuals whose primary duties consist of teaching or spreading religious doctrine or belief, religious governance, supervision of a religious order, supervision of persons teaching or spreading religious doctrine or belief, or supervision or participation in religious ritual or worship.

(c) Conformity to Religious Tenets: Under this Act, a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society may require that applicants for, and employees in, similar positions conform to those religious tenets that such corporation, association, institution, or society declares significant. Under this Act, such a declaration by a religious corporation, association, educational institution or society stating which of its religious tenets are significant shall not be subject to judicial or administrative review. Any such declaration made for purposes of this Act shall be admissible only for proceedings under this Act.

SEC. 7. NONAPPLICATION TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES; VETERANS' PREFERENCES.

(a) Armed Forces:

(1) EMPLOYMENT: In this Act, the term 'employment' does not apply to the relationship between the United States and members of the Armed Forces.

(2) ARMED FORCES: In paragraph (1) the term 'Armed Forces' means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

(b) Veterans' Preferences: This title does not repeal or modify any Federal, State, territorial, or local law creating a special right or preference concerning employment for a veteran.

SEC. 8. CONSTRUCTION.

(a) Employer Rules and Policies:

(1) IN GENERAL: Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit a covered entity from enforcing rules and policies that do not circumvent the purposes of this Act, if the rules or policies are designed for, and uniformly applied to, all individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

(2) SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit a covered entity from taking adverse action against an individual because of a charge of sexual harassment against that individual, provided that rules and policies on sexual harassment, including when adverse action is taken, are designed for, and uniformly applied to, all individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

(3) CERTAIN SHARED FACILITIES: Nothing in this Act shall be construed to establish an unlawful employment practice based on actual or perceived gender identity due to the denial of access to shared shower or dressing facilities in which being seen fully unclothed is unavoidable, provided that the employer provides reasonable access to adequate facilities that are not inconsistent with the employ-

ee's gender identity as established with the employer at the time of employment or upon notification to the employer that the employee has undergone or is undergoing gender transition, whichever is later.

(4) DRESS AND GROOMING STANDARDS: Nothing in this Act shall prohibit an employer from requiring an employee, during the employee's hours at work, to adhere to reasonable dress or grooming standards not prohibited by other provisions of Federal, State, or local law, provided that the employer permits any employee who has undergone gender transition prior to the time of employment, and any employee who has notified the employer that the employee has undergone or is undergoing gender transition after the time of employment, to adhere to the same dress or grooming standards for the gender to which the employee has transitioned or is transitioning.

(5) ACTIONS CONDITIONED ON MARRIAGE: Notwithstanding section 4(g), an unlawful employment practice under section 4 shall include an action described in that section that is conditioned, in a State in which a person cannot marry a person of the same sex, either on being married or being eligible to marry.

(b) Employee Benefits: Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require a covered entity to treat a couple who are not married, including a same-sex couple who are not married, in the same manner as the covered entity treats a married couple for purposes of employee benefits. Notwithstanding this Act or any other provision of law, a State or political subdivision of a State may establish rights, remedies, or procedures for the provision of employee benefits to an individual for the benefit of the domestic partner of such individual.

SEC. 9. COLLECTION OF STATISTICS PROHIBITED.

The Commission shall not collect statistics on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity from covered entities, or compel the collection of such statistics by covered entities.

SEC. 1— ENFORCEMENT.

(a) Enforcement Powers: With respect to the administration and enforcement of this Act in the case of a claim alleged by an individual for a violation of this Act--

(1) the Commission shall have the same powers as the Commission has to administer and enforce--

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.); or

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c),

in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title, or of section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e:16b(a)(1)), respectively;

(2) the Librarian of Congress shall have the same powers as the Librarian of Congress has to administer and enforce title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(3) the Board (as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301)) shall have the same powers as the Board has to administer and enforce the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1));

(4) the Attorney General shall have the same powers as the Attorney General has to administer and enforce--

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.); or

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c);

in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title, or of section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b(a)(1)), respectively;

(5) the President, the Commission, and the Merit Systems Protection Board shall have the same powers as the President, the Commission, and the Board, respectively, have to administer and enforce chapter 5 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 411 of such title;

(6) a court of the United States shall have the same jurisdiction and powers as the court has to enforce--

(A) title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(B) sections 302 and 304 of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b and 2000e-16c) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 302(a)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 2000e-16b(a)(1));

(C) the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)); and

(D) chapter 5 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of section 411 of such title.

(b) Procedures and Remedies: The procedures and remedies applicable to a claim alleged by an individual for a violation of this Act are--

(1) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such title;

(2) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 302(a)(1) of the Government Employee Rights Act of 1991 (2 U.S.C. 1202(a)(1))in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section;

(3) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)) in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section; and

(4) the procedures and remedies applicable for a violation of section 411 of title 3, United States Code, in the case of a claim alleged by such individual for a violation of such section.

(c) Other Applicable Provisions: With respect to a claim alleged by a covered employee (as defined in section 101 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1301)) for a violation of this Act, title III of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.) shall apply in the same manner as such title applies with respect to a claim alleged by such a covered employee for a violation of section 201(a)(1) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1311(a)(1)).

SEC. 11. STATE AND FEDERAL IMMUNITY.

(a) State Immunity: A State shall not be immune under the 11th amendment to the Constitution from a suit described in subsection (b) and brought in a Federal court of competent jurisdiction for a violation of this Act.

(b) Remedies for State Employees:

(1) IN GENERAL:

(A) WAIVER: A State's receipt or use of Federal financial assistance for any program or activity of a State shall constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity, under the 11th amendment to the Constitution or otherwise, to a suit brought by an employee or applicant for employment of that program or activity under this Act for a remedy authorized under subsection (c).

(B) DEFINITION: In this paragraph, the term 'program or activity' has the meaning given the term in section 606 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d:4a).

(2) OFFICIALS: An official of a State may be sued in the official capacity of the official by any employee or applicant for employment who has complied with the applicable procedures of section 10, for equitable relief that is authorized under this Act. In such a suit the court may award to the prevailing party those costs authorized by section 722 of the Revised Statutes of the United States (42 U.S.C. 1988).

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE: With respect to a particular program or activity, paragraphs (1) and (2) apply to conduct occurring on or after the day, after the date of enactment of this Act, on which a State first receives or uses Federal financial assistance for that program or activity.

(c) Remedies Against the United States and the States: Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, in an action or administrative proceeding against the United States or a State for a violation of this Act, remedies (including remedies at law and in equity, and interest) are available for the violation to the same extent as the remedies are available for a violation of title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.) by a private entity, except that--

(1) punitive damages are not available; and

(2) compensatory damages are available to the extent specified in section 1977A(b) of the Revised Statutes (42 U.S.C. 1981a(b)).

SEC. 12. ATTORNEYS' FEES.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, in an action or administrative proceeding for a violation of this Act, an entity described in section 10(a) (other than paragraph (4) of such section), in the discretion of the entity, may allow the prevailing party, other than the Commission or the United States, a reasonable attorney's fee (including expert fees) as part of the costs. The Commission and the United States shall be liable for the costs to the same extent as a private person.

SEC. 13. POSTING NOTICES.

A covered entity who is required to post notices described in section 711 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e-10) shall post notices for employees, applicants for employment, and members, to whom the provisions specified in section 10(b) apply, that describe the applicable provisions of this Act in the manner prescribed by, and subject to the penalty provided under, section 711 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

SEC. 14. REGULATIONS.

(a) In General: Except as provided in subsections (b), (c), and (d), the Commission shall have authority to issue regulations to carry out this Act.

(b) Librarian of Congress: The Librarian of Congress shall have authority to issue regulations to carry out this Act with respect to employees and applicants for employment of the Library of Congress.

(c) Board: The Board referred to in section 10(a)(3) shall have authority to issue regulations to carry out this Act, in accordance with section 304 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1384), with respect to covered employees, as defined in section 101 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1301).

(d) President: The President shall have authority to issue regulations to carry out this Act with respect to covered employees, as defined in section 411(c) of title 3, United States Code.

SEC. 15. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.

This Act shall not invalidate or limit the rights, remedies, or procedures available to an individual claiming discrimination prohibited under any other Federal law or regulation or any law or regulation of a State or political subdivision of a State.

SEC. 16. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or the application of the provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this Act and the application of the provision to any other person or circumstances shall not be affected by the invalidity.

SEC. 17. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act and shall not apply to conduct occurring before the effective date.

I'm Here

by Muriel Ring

When I told my early-Alzheimer sister that my daughter is now my son, she lit up and said,
"I saw a movie once about a girl who dressed as a boy. She was cute. She had a…"
She struggled for the word as she placed her hand under her nose.
"A mustache?" I asked.
"Yes," my sister replied. She continued, "You know, worse things could happen."

*

My child gave me signs
Which I collected but did not collate.

*

I remember . . .
The prom night she worked at the Drug Store,
Blue hair, red hair, no hair,
Shopping in the men's department for undies and socks,
Wondering as she snuggled with her friend,
Her very hairy, unshaven legs.

*

The night she called from the other room.
"Mom?"
"Yes?"
"I think I'm bisexual."
"Oh."

That's all my dry mouth and stunned mind could manage.

*

From bi- to lesbian .

I joined PFLAG and HRC
Put on bumper stickers, went to Pride marches.

I would not lose her because of me . . .

*

From lesbian to the semester in Cuba where locals could not figure out "what" she was
As they harassed and jeered.

*

Home again.
Talk of breast-to-chest surgery . . .
Checking out websites, viewing graphic photos, meeting post-op friends,
Numbing up inside again, unable to talk, grateful that I couldn't,
Knowing it was going to happen
with or without me.

I could not choose not to be there.

*

The deciding moment in the doctor's waiting room . . .
My son's debit card would not go through.
No money, no surgery.
No surgery?
Well, wouldn't that be wonderful?

What to do? Sit tight? Offer my credit card?
What's a mom to do?

Offer the credit card . . .
If I want to tag along, keep him in view, offer the credit card.

*

Top wrapped up like a mummy, zombied from Percocet, he surfaced for drinks from the flexi straw.
I emptied his drains,
Watched him sleep,
Read Buddhist comfort,
Prayed for him and for us,
Watched him sleep,
Grateful to be there,
Grateful for his trust,
For his courage.

Luke, standing in front of full-length mirror, unbuttoning his shirt for his first real look at his chest, bandaged and flat.
He smiled,
He glowed,
He damn near strutted.

*

From the name I chose, to the name he chose.
Sitting in the courtroom, flanked by his sister and me.
We loved him,
Fearful for what he might encounter.

Suzanne Anderer, CPE

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The judge tried so hard to be open, to be "fatherly."
He didn't get it,
But he allowed it.

*

Providence, RI
Wham! Bang! Trans Fest
Trannies gathered from all over the continent
To celebrate in Film, Art and Spoken Word
Conceived and created by my son
I was there, included, honored and awed.

And now,
On his own in San Francisco
Employed, independent,
Calls his mom, just to talk.

*

This is what I know:
The story his life writes is not about me.
If it didn't matter whether he was "he" or "she" before he was born, it doesn't now.
If you know that you would die for someone, you must be there to help him live.

OBITUARY

kari edwards (d. 2006) was a poet, artist and gender activist, winner of New Langton Art's Bay Area Award in literature (2002); was the author of have been blue for charity, BlazeVox (2006); obedience, Factory School (2005); iduna, O Books (2003); a day in the life of p., subpress collective (2002); a diary of lies, Belladonna #27 by Belladonna Books (2002); obLiqUE paRt(itON): colLABorationS, xPress(ed) (2002); and post/(pink), Scarlet Press (2000). edwards' work has appeared in numerous publications, such as anthologies Blood and Tears: Poems for Matthew Shepard, Painted leaf Press (2000), and Electric Spandex: anthology of writing the queer text, Pyriform Press (2002); as well as been exhibited throughout the United States, including Denver art museum, New Orleans contemporary art museum, University of California -- San Diego, and University of Massachusetts -- Amherst.

kari died of heart failure at age 52 on 02 December, 2006.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: kari edwards was the Poetry Editor for Transgender Tapestry for years. She will be missed.

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Tele: (781) 862-6170
Gender Specialist, individual, couple, family and group counseling for the transgender community. Support for partners and TG parenting, medical care and surgical referrals, workplace transitions. Support groups for MTF and FTM.

Diane Ellaborn, LICSW, NASW Diplomat in Clinical Social Work
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Ellen Rottersmann, MSW, LICSW
Brookline, MA
Individual and couple psychotherapy for the transgender community. Gender identity exploration, evaluations for hormones and surgery, transition support and support for partners.
Tele: 617-730-9417
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Rebecca Z. Shafir, M.A.CCC
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E-mail: info@drlisagriffin.com

OHIO

Gender Dysphoria Program of Central Ohio
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Tele: (614) 451-0111
Web: www.genderprogram.com
E-mail: crane@genderprogram.com
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Contact: Meral Crane, MA, LPCC
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Michele Angello, Ph.D.
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Web: www.yoursexdocs.com
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TEXAS

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Sexuality Education Center
1020 Macon St., Suite 20, Fort Worth, TX 76102
Tele: (817) 338-4551
E-mail: Drritac@ev1.net

Transformations Psychotherapy Services
Katy Koonce, LMSW
3625 Manchaca Ste. #103, Austin, TX 78704
Tele: (512) 329-6699
E-mail: caycewakes@aol.com
TG psychotherapist providing compassionate, comprehensive transgender care. Individual, relationship, and group therapy.

Feleshia Porter, MS, LPC
3530 Forest Lane, Suite 188, Dallas, TX 75234
Tele: (214) 904-8222
E-mail: feleshia@aol.com
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VERMONT

Rebecca Sherlock, LICSW, DCSW
Diplomate in Clinical Social Work
Burlington and Montpelier, VT
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Martha Harris, LCSW, CHT, TFT
Banyan Counseling Center
2820 School Street, Alexandria, VA 22303
Tele: (703) 717-0999
E-mail: BanyanCounseling@aol.com
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Rusty Lynn, LCSW, Pastoral Counselor
Tele: (703) 903-9696, ext. 269
Over ten years experience helping transgender persons, their spouses, family members, and friends. Referrals to medical professionals when appropriate. Offices in Washington, DC near Metro Center, & N. Arlington, VA.

WASHINGTON

Center For Gender Sanity
Janis Walworth, Michele Kämmerer
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Tele: (360) 398-2878
E-Mail: director@gendersanity.org
Web: www.gendersanity.com
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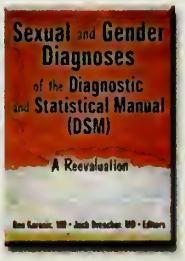

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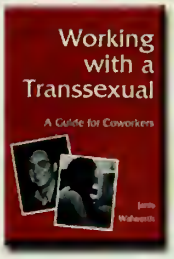

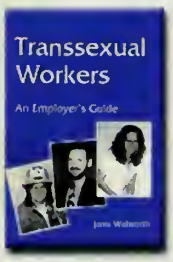

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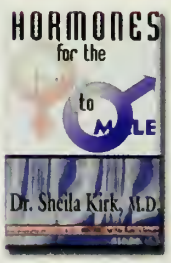

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